HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

McCONNELL

Class 239.5 - M136 Book
General Theological Seminary Library
CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK

Purchased from the fund bequeathed to the Seminary by
EUGENE AUGUSTUS HOFFMAN, D. D.
DEAN 1879-1902

HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

BY

FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL

Bishop, Methodist Episcopal Church

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1928

All rights reserved

2395
M136
85460

COPYRIGHT, 1928,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped.
Published, October, 1928.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

Printed in the United States of America by
THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY, NEW YORK

TO

PRESIDENT EVERETT C. HERRICK

WHO AS PASTOR AND TEACHER

FASHIONS CHRISTIAN INSTRUMENTS

FOR THOSE HUMAN ENDS

WHICH ARE INCARNATED IN THE DIVINE LIFE

PREFACE

This book contains a series of lectures given on the Stephen Greene Foundation at the Newton Theological Institution, Newton Centre, Mass., in 1927. The fund was established in 1917 by the family of the late Stephen Greene, one of the great benefactors of Newton. It was their stipulation that "the income from the fund shall be used to secure from time to time the services of scholars prepared to deliver lectures on important subjects related to Christianity in recent history." For the sake of the convenience of the reader I have divided all the lectures except one into two parts and have given them chapter headings different from the titles of the lectures. Aside from this the material here is substantially the same as that delivered at the Newton Theological Institution.

THE AUTHOR.

Pittsburgh, Pa.
May 15, 1928.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Preface	vii
I.	Introductory: Scriptural Religion and the Human Values	1
II.	The Church and the World	11
III.	Instrumentalism	32
IV.	Christian Intolerance	47
V.	Society and the Higher Individualism	63
VI.	Jesus and Vested Interests	82
VII.	Mysticism and Its Human Consequences	96
VIII.	Human Nature and Divine	125
IX.	The Path of Greatest Resistance	143

HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY: SCRIPTURAL RELIGION AND THE HUMAN VALUES

It does not require any profound discernment in the ordinary reader to detect the convergence of various lines of thought to-day upon the exaltation of the human values. Mr. Bertrand Russell is reported as having recently said that he has slight patience with Kant as a philosopher. Surely there is difference enough between Kant's philosophy and Bertrand Russell's, but it is interesting to note that in a discussion of education Mr. Russell insists that the supreme consideration in education is the worth of the personality of the pupil on his own account, that personality being conceived of as the sacred value which the educational process should conserve and develop. As we read this from Russell we cannot help recalling that it was Kant who spoke with more cogency than any other philosopher up to the beginning of the nineteenth century on the human being as an end-in-himself, never to be used as stuff or tool, never to be exploited for the benefit of anyone or anything else.

This reference to Kant and Russell might be

paralleled indefinitely by citing other thinkers of all types, economists, students of politics, experts in social study, masters in various professional activities who totally disagree on most points with others even of their own groups, and yet who practically unite on the sacredness of the human being as an end-in-himself. We seldom pick up a magazine or a newspaper to-day without coming upon protests of labor groups, for example, who file objection to the laborer's being considered as a "hand." The least skilled of workers, the lowest-paid wage-earners maintain that they must be spoken of as men and women, and this claim passes as commonplace virtually everywhere, to be accepted without question, though there is indeed much violation of the claim in practice.

It is obvious to the student of Christianity that this emphasis on human worth is in one form or another integral in the Christian system, and was central to the Judaism out of which Christianity arose. There can be little question that it would be possible to rewrite the history of Christian religion, beginning with the origin of its basal conceptions among the Jews and continuing down to the present hour, with the development of human life toward the highest and best as the main theme. In fact the religion does not need any such rewriting, for the story as told in the Scriptures carries

that message on its face. The Scriptures are the record of a movement that proceeded with a double aim, that of the seizure of increasingly moral conceptions of God for the sake of the better moralization of human life, and that of the grasp of better ideas of morality for man for the sake of the moralization of the idea of God. Perhaps I should not speak as if this double aim were conscious and intentional. It would probably be closer to historic exactness to say that the life of Israel did move in this twofold direction, whether the movement was deliberately planned by Israelitish leaders or not.

Without any attempt fully to trace the course of Israel as to this tendency let us pick out a few instructive illustrations. We look first at the development of Israelitish law. Now the laws of Israel are consolidated out of various elements, some of these heathen in their origin, vestiges of paganism which because of their fancied importance or their own interestingness clung fast to Israelitish customs through the centuries. Other factors manifestly have, or were supposed to have, survival value, as the rules governing ceremonial cleanliness. Others are the manifestation of a growing awareness of human worth as such. These latter came somewhat from the simple rudimentary understandings of the worth of the free-handed individual as that worth was revealed and developed

in the existence in the desert, and somewhat from the words of the moral prophets whose insights after a time became codified in the law. It may be noteworthy that the prophets of the larger and better morality did not lay much stress on argument based on what we should call practical consequences. Nor did they make as much use of arbitrarily conceived divine decree as we should have expected. They counted rather upon the creation in Israel of the direct power to discern moral considerations as if they were obvious. Micah puts the whole case for a human and humane religion in the query: What doth the Lord require of thee? Doth he require thy first-born for transgression? The prophet assumed that there was in Israel enough of direct moral perception to reject human sacrifice as soon as the question as to the nature of such sacrifice was openly put.

The coming of Israel to Canaan, we are often reminded, was like a countryman's moving into town to make his residence there. The land of Canaan flowed with milk and honey. To speak in our modern terms, there were in this diet more calories than the children of Israel were accustomed to, and naturally they tended to wax fat. We are told that Jeshurun, which I believe is another name for Israel, waxed fat and kicked. We do not usually think of fat people as prone to much kick-

ing, but what Jeshurun probably kicked about was the prophetic suggestion that he should cut down on the milk and honey that made him fat. In a word, the fuller material life into which Israel came brought with it a hazard to those moral qualities which suggest a type of lean and strenuous moral fervor, that fervor itself being a noble human quality. So Elijah appears to start the long warfare against a religion which deified the animal impulses in man, a deification which was then resulting in the steady degradation of human character and the disregard for human rights. We have only to read passages here and there from the Old Testament prophets to discern the cruelty and aberrations which flowed from Israel's too complete acceptance of the Canaanitish teaching concerning the sanctity of natural activities. Sexual irregularities of the most abominable order, and even the sacrificial slaughter of the first-born, time and again got foothold in Israel through the preaching of the religion of the baals, the gods of fertile fields and flocks.

Now, whenever a moral prophet appears in Israel he speaks always as one testing the life of the time by a human ideal which has back of it a sanction of the Lord. In Amos's figure we see a plummet line which symbolizes that straightness which men were to keep before them as they ap-

proached the duties of just dealing one with another. I remember once hearing a distinguished artist discussing the decay of a fellow craftsman whose artistic excellence had fallen off after years of dishonesty and perfidy in daily conduct. The critic summed it all up in a sentence or two. "After a decade of dishonesty our friend lost his power to use the straight line. His work became tawdry, full of over-elaborate curves, suggestive of jim-cracks and gewgaws. The simplicity of the straight line was no longer his." Every time we listen to a Hebrew prophet we feel that he is calling for the straight line, and straight lines are only possible, in thought and feeling and conduct, to the morally disciplined.

Think of one or two statesmen in the course of Israel's history. Isaiah gazes out upon the approaching armies of Assyria and is confident that Assyria cannot capture Jerusalem. Now we may pore over the speeches of Isaiah with the closest scrutiny and we cannot find any indication that Isaiah conceived of Jerusalem as sacred in itself, or that he fancied that the Lord of Israel was indulgently showing favor to Jerusalem. He thought in moral terms. The moral and spiritual values for whose preservation Jerusalem was at the given hour an indispensable instrument were uppermost with Isaiah. Hurrying on to a little later period

we find Jeremiah advocating a policy which in our current terminology would be called defeatist. Jeremiah was badly treated by his patriotic contemporaries, but probably not as badly as if he could have lived at the time of our Great War and have preached a message to any one of the warring nations similar to that which he proclaimed in the sixth century before Christ. Jeremiah, speaking with his characteristic directness to any one of the belligerent nations between 1914 and 1918, would have been fortunate to escape being stood against a wall and shot. He had so firmly grasped the worth of the individual as capable of receiving divine truth that he was willing to see Jerusalem destroyed and the inhabitants thereof carried away to Babylon for the sake of the better grasp on the moral and spiritual ideals which he perceived as the final glory of Israel.

Glance now at one or two books of Israelitish origin which we to-day characterize as almost purely literary. Turn for a moment the pages of Job. What is most remarkable about this astounding drama? The theme is indeed the weightiest which up to the time of the author had engaged human reflection, namely, the undeserved suffering of innocent men at the hands of God. Job made a long advance beyond contemporaneous Jewish theology in forcing religious teachers to recognize that

their explanation of human suffering as punishment for transgression was inadequate and even perverse. In spite of the self-sufficient wisdom of his advisers who sought to apply to him the customary orthodoxy, Job swept the advisers and their advice to one side, with the sarcastic comment that surely wisdom would die with them but that their counsel was wrong. Job had walked in his integrity and he knew it. The book does not give any answer to its own question, but it does represent the hero of the drama as persisting until he compels God Himself to appear and plead the divine case. In a word, an outstanding feature of this wonderful book is the assumption that Job as a human being is important enough in his own human right and on his own human account to force the Almighty not merely to listen to a human complaint but to make reply. Job seems to be satisfied when the Almighty himself appears in court. If he can believe that God hears and will answer he is willing to forego his demand for an understandable explanation. The assumption in Job that God has something which he must explain to men, and that men can call God to a reckoning, is one of the mightiest revelations of Israel's hold on the worth of men.

Permit one other illustration from the Old Testament. The Book of Jonah is likewise noteworthy

for its assumption that a man has a right to file complaint against God himself, and to argue out his case with God. Of course Jonah's argument is pitifully weak, but the weakness itself lends point to the story. Any modern judge would rule out such pleading as an almost contemptible whining. Jonah, though belonging to the chosen people, appears in bad light as over against the heathen sailors at the time of storm, and as contrasted with the eagerly repentant pagans who hearkened to the preaching at Nineveh. It almost seems as if the Book of Jonah were trying to teach that a man can say anything to God with impunity. The argument of Jonah is so flimsy as to constitute it a veritable contempt of the Divine Court. Against this spiritual smallness however as a foil, is set the divine regard for the Ninevites as human beings. There is a suggestion almost whimsical in the final touch as to the care of God for men—God having regard also for the "much cattle"—as if the goods which men held as valuable for their daily existence had on that account also value in the sight of God.

It would be futile to attempt the task of adequately stating the significance of Jesus for the human ideal. Suffice it to say that the Church has always acted upon a sound instinct when insisting upon the full humanity in our Lord, that humanity being conceived of as a channel through which the

deepest truth about God can be poured upon men. The power of the Incarnation lies just in that it is an incarnation, a utilization of human nature and human existence for the essential revelation of the Divine. The Apostles' Creed, which we now recite to confirm our belief in the Divinity of Jesus, originally sought to establish his humanity. The framers of the creed strove to give lasting expression to the facts that Jesus was born, and that he did suffer, and did die—three experiences which no human being can escape—all the experiences significant enough to be royal avenues through which divine life moves into human life.

If I may be pardoned something of sketchiness of treatment, may I in the next chapter attempt to show that the intent of the Church of Christ, in three or four of her perennially recurring attitudes toward the world in which Christianity exists, has always been to safeguard human values which the religious intuition of the Scriptures has seized as indispensable. If I may, I will look at these attitudes in some of their present-day manifestations.

Chapter II

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

We are living in a day when the fundamental Christian aim is fairly well agreed upon. We now hear from all sides that the distinctiveness of Christianity lies in its approach to the problems of man and the universe from the ethical point of view. Christendom is not more widely religious, or more intensively pious, than are some of the so-called non-Christian lands. The peculiarity of Christianity is in emphasis on ethical obligation, and on the ideal which it takes as the goal of moral effort—that ideal being human life at its highest and best. Christianity is not to be called moral as devoted to a code of abstract ethical requirements, but as feeling an ethical obligation to set before the world the highest and best life for men. This life for men is conceived of as revealed, or suggested, or implied in Christ, the revelation of that Revelation constantly expanding as men take it upon themselves to live in the spirit of Christ. The question, then, as to what is humanly highest and best becomes a standard by which the Church is to judge its course at any given period.

Over against the Church is set what has from the beginning been called the "World." It would be folly for me to attempt to define this constantly used term. We have often linked together the World, the Flesh and the Devil, practically making the expressions synonymous and interchangeable. At other times we have spoken of the world as the realm of the natural, or of the secular. For our purposes we may think of the world as the sum of those natural forces, and those secular activities, which it is the duty of the Church to attempt to redeem. We have long talked of the world as the subject of redemption, but our age is insisting as never before that this redemption be taken seriously by the Church. It will be remembered that in the last generation religious teachers of the type of Mr. Moody conceived of the world as a sinking ship from which it was the duty of the Church to rescue as many individuals as possible. Now we conceive of the world as a ship to be saved, the total of institutional forces being redeemed throughout.

Reinhold Niebuhr has cogently shown us that the Church has from the beginning of its history taken various attitudes toward this huge problem. As we read through Mr. Niebuhr's statement we are struck by the consideration that each of these diverse attitudes has had back of it at the time a sound human instinct, namely, the conservation of

the highest moral and spiritual interests of mankind. The range of such attitudes is not large. Without confining ourselves to Mr. Niebuhr's scheme of treatment let us look at the conscious or unconscious proneness of the Church to test its ever-recurring attitudes toward the world by the moral ideals of Christianity. The question is simply as to how these attitudes appear when judged by their effect on the largest and finest life of the men and women and children whose spiritual welfare is the concern of Christianity.

First of all there have been times when the Church has preached, or inculcated by its own example, the duty of men to take the world just about as they find it and make of it the best possible use. Human beings live in this world and living itself means adaptation and adjustment. Men must find some scheme of practical conduct, and some method of intellectual adjustment which will make it possible for them, if not to attain to the peace that passeth understanding, at least to win a measure of peace that can be understood. It has always been an obligation upon the Church to help in such adjustment. Men feel that instincts, or impulses, or stimuli, or whatever the psychologist chooses to call the life forces, have at least to a degree, right of way. To a degree they must be accepted. We cannot help yielding ourselves to them.

Christianity has always taken this actual world as one of the many mansions of the Father's house, and has sought to adorn the house with some measure of spiritual beauty. We have it on high authority that that was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterwards that which was spiritual. The body of natural and even secular forces, into the midst of which we are born, constitutes the material on the basis of which the highest and best life is to be built up. Practically nobody denies this to-day. Our attempts through child-nurture and the control of the yeasty spiritual ferment in the period of adolescence, to say nothing of our efforts at education of lives in later stages, show how thoroughly we have accepted the life that now is as a basis for redemptive effort. It has become a commonplace with us that natural laws reach far over into spiritual realms. Quite likely a good deal of current restlessness over miracle springs not from an irreligious but from a religious temper; it is the desire to find and commune with the Divine in the ordinary orderliness of the forces of everyday life. We have gone far, at least in our speech, to wipe out the distinction between secular and sacred.

A wise adage tells us however that wearing our Sunday clothes every day comes at last to wearing our everyday clothes on Sunday. It is not possible

to sanctify the secular without to an extent secularizing the sacred. So after seasons of adjustment in the world in all ages the Church sees that the entirely legitimate recognition of the function of the world in human life militates against some of those higher and better goods for men for which Christianity stands. We need only a glance at the history of our religion to see that the service rendered by the prophets of all eras has been in the rebuke of such pressure of this world against the higher human interests.

Just at present we are hearing a deal about letting ourselves go in self-expression for the purpose of self-realization. This advice seems to move in the direction of something very fine for humanity. The self-expression movement is not new. We have about reached the place where Christianity will call attention again to a few elementary human considerations. It ought to be fairly obvious that self-expression is a bit futile until there is a self to express, and to attain a self to express requires at least a minimum of vigorous discipline. Much of this futile self-expression is not in itself morally wrong, but it is a nuisance to those who have to put up with the expression. I do not feel any tendency to check any of the self-expression of to-day except when the self-expressionists insist that I must stop my work to look at them, or when they keep bawl-

ing out their self-expressions where I have to hear them. Freedom of speech on the part of a speaker has to be balanced in any democratic community by the freedom of the listeners not to listen, and the exercise of the freedom not to listen is hotly resented by the free speakers. My personal inconvenience to one side however, we may well surmise that the time is about ripe for the Church again to utter a prophetic voice to the effect that self-realization of the kind we hear so much about does not realize much. To glance at the realm of intellect alone, for illustration, we all have to admit that the conceptions which give us our stupendous control of nature are mathematical. The table of logarithms is one of the most effective time-saving devices ever contrived. The control of physical forces has been made possible in chief part by mathematical inventions like the calculus. If we were summoned to name the half dozen most important intellectual achievements of the human race in its mastery of the natural world we should have to confine our list almost wholly to fundamentally mathematical conquests. Now I do not know how the mathematical genius works, but his published formulas do not seem to me to hint that in his seizure of them he had riotously let himself go. In other words the highest human achievements, as achievements, are possible only as we continue to

put check on the lower impulses in the name of the higher. A keen ethical student once remarked that in the high days of the Greeks the Epicureans who sought to make the most of themselves out of their philosophy found living not much more boisterous than that under the precepts of the Stoics.

When Christianity has realized time and again the danger of yielding to the forces of this world even in what has seemed at the beginning innocent adjustment, Christian leaders have cried out that the Church always must be militant, that the correct attitude of the Church to the world is that of resistance. The world must be looked upon as the inevitable foe of the Church, if we are to save out of our experiences the moral values good on their own account. There are reasons why this militancy must always be an attitude of the Church. There is no discharge in the war of a church against the forces of evil. Still, we need the prophet's voice to remind us that when we start out to fight the world the danger is that we shall use the world's own weapons, and that using those weapons we become worldly at the expense of the highest and best in our souls. One curse of any warfare is that it has a downhill tendency in the use of weapons. In a life-and-death fistic encounter for his own self-preservation a high-minded gentleman might find himself reduced to biting and gouging because his

blackguard opponent bit and gouged. The meaner fighter too often chooses the weapon. I knew the late William Jennings Bryan to make once a happy retort to a heckler on this very point. Mr. Bryan was pleading for higher and nobler political methods in American public life. An impatient realist in the audience finally found it impossible to restrain himself, and called out asking if we ought not to fight the devil with fire. With the utmost good humor Mr. Bryan walked to the edge of the platform and replied: "My friend, I don't believe I'd try to fight the devil with fire if I were you. In the first place the devil knows more about fire than you do, and in the next place it costs him less for fuel." Mr. Bryan might have added that the only way a man can become as effective as the devil in fighting with fire is to attain to a devilish skill in such methods and by that time the humanity of the fire-user is considerably singed.

Christianity's fighting the world is wholly legitimate so long as the methods are Christian. I think we can all agree upon some essentially Christian methods,—the unflinching proclamation in prophetic speech of the Christian ideal, the attempt to train minds to quick discernment of moral truth, the effort to persuade men to follow the best. Sidney and Beatrice Webb have said that Measurement and Publicity are the best weapons for social

redemption, precise estimate according to a standard and the publication of the results. The Webbs were thinking of statistical measurements, but the Church has standards which it can use with increasing precision—and it has organs of publicity. Anything beyond this, lobbying, propaganda, political maneuvers, may well be subjected to prophetic scrutiny. When however the Church has relied upon political methods, as ordinarily understood, and upon propaganda, she has had to keep her eyes wide open as to what she has been doing. Throughout all the ages the Church has made the sorriest messes of things, and the worst exhibitions of herself, when she has tried to use the world's weapons against the world. The weapons of the world can seldom be used effectively except in the world's spirit, and that spirit at least points away from all ideals which can be characterized by the name of Christ. There is always pressing duty of the scrutiny of the methods by which Christianity seeks to conquer the world. The immediate effectiveness of the methods is not the first consideration. The crucial test is the effect of the world's weapons upon the church that uses them. Developing moral life shows itself in increasing fineness of moral feeling, a feeling which simply evaporates when coarseness marks ecclesiastical method.

Once more the Church, discouraged in its at-

tempts to make legitimate use of the world on the one hand, or to conquer the world by ecclesiastic militancy on the other, has again and again sought relief by preaching the doctrine of withdrawal from the world altogether, and the establishment of a society which, while in the world, is not of the world. We see in monasticism the most logical manifestations of this withdrawal spirit. Many times we forget the transcendent human goods held fast by monasticism because of the more absurd lengths to which some monastics went. The mood which leads to withdrawal is ever recurring. A year or two ago some leaders of what was once the established church in Germany were plunged into despair as to the possibility of the accomplishment by the Church of any world-redeeming success. These leaders felt that, after a war such as the World War and after the kind of peace that followed that war, all the Church could do was to step to one side and let the world go by, the Church itself retiring to the inward contemplation of divine truth. This mood ever and again comes upon men, and there was enough in the world situation which called forth Monasticism in the olden times and in the German conditions after the World War to justify the mood.

Apart from such despair of the world, however, we must always encourage the willingness on the

part of at least a few to let the world go by, in the name of the higher goods. Something akin to this is recognized as of sound educational policy in the conduct of universities and other centers of learning. Scholars of unusual ability are encouraged to seek truth for its own sake, without any regard to the practical results which may follow from discovery. Such scholars themselves often seem totally blind to what is going forward in the work-a-day world. To such scholars life often becomes solitary, as bare of luxuries as a monk's cell. To be sure such absorbed pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself is likely to be followed by the most far-reaching practical consequences, but the scholar is not thinking of the consequences, but only of the knowledge. He finds his delight in the thrill of learning itself, and of course achieves in himself extraordinarily rare character, a character which the world simply cannot afford to lose or ignore.

If the realm of learning is thus dependent upon the production of such unusual incarnations of the scholarly spirit, the world of moral endeavor in the strictest sense must likewise have those who seek the good life for its own sake and on its own account. That was an acute remark recently uttered by Professor A. E. Taylor, of Scotland, when he declared that modern civilization owes an incal-

culable debt to a man who cared nothing at all for civilization, namely, Saint Francis of Assisi. Here was one who defied the world outright in utter contempt for what the world called good. Yet this impractical saint realized in himself and set on high for all ages an ideal which has influenced the course of civilization ever since. Saint Francis lived almost a thousand years ago, and yet books drop from the press almost every year telling of what he was, and what he has meant to the world. The Church is indeed fortunate when a man of the Saint Francis stamp appears, and when increasing numbers of adherents enter in, if only for brief period, to the spirit of Saint Francis.

Here again however the victory over the world is seldom complete. One ideal for enlarging human character is to hold the natural forces so easily and yet so effectively in hand that they do not thrust themselves into consciousness for larger place than they deserve. The world has a way of taking deep revenge on him who seeks to ignore it altogether. It is as if one should seek to protest against gluttony by declaring a fast for himself, or by resolving to take only enough food to keep soul and body together. The outcome of such heroism would be that pictures of food-laden tables would haunt the imagination of the ascetic more inescapably than that of the glutton. So that there must be preached

such an absorption in the higher goods that secondary matters take only secondary place.

The danger in the withdrawal from the world is in losing sight of healthy-mindedness as a condition of the deeper spiritual insights. William James did not rank healthy-mindedness high in the scale as a prerequisite of religious discernment, but James was using the term for an almost physical state, or for a temper in which the maxims of common sense appeared to be the sum of wisdom. Healthy-mindedness in the intellectual realm is what Matthew Arnold called power to see truth steadily and to see it whole. In artistic endeavor it shows itself in such fundamentals as an appreciation of the basic design of a creation. Artistic freakishness shows itself in lack of symmetry, or in defiance of principles which govern each detail of painting or sculpture as surely as the law of gravitation rules the curve of the ribs in the roof of a Gothic cathedral. So too in those central problems which we call moral, healthy-mindedness reveals itself in an awareness of the essential around which minor details arrange themselves in satisfactory perspective. The duty of the Church has always been more or less conceived to be to encourage the brooding contemplation in which the various aspects of life arrange themselves around that center which we know as the Spirit of Christ. In her

search for moral truth the Church has sought to make provision for the thoroughly human way of arriving at truth. A year or two ago Graham Wallas wrote a suggestive book entitled *The Art of Thought,* in which he pulled out into sharp focus the necessity of what he called the period of incubation for any genuine thinking. By incubation he meant this brooding of which I am now speaking. If it is necessary for schools to seek to create the conditions in which intellectual incubation takes place, how much more sound has it been for Christianity to insist upon opportunity for a like process in the development of any saintliness which is at all human.

The Church has always insisted that there must be seasons of withdrawal from the world for purposes of worship. It is well that we hear to-day so much about the imperative necessity of worship. Our theological students are being told that worship must be made the essential in our modern church services. Even in much of our church building we are putting the pulpit off to one side that the altar may come to its due prominence. But the Church has always asked: How are we to conceive of all this in fundamentally human terms? How much of the genuinely ethical is there in it? A distinguished religious teacher has recently told us that there need not be anything especially ethical

in worship at all. This leads us to surmise that if we drop the strenuously moral out of our Christian service we may go a long distance toward Paganism. Paganism is worshipful enough. To be sure it is unreasonable to ask a worshiper to define with any strictness the object, or the method, or the spirit of his worship, but if worship is to be the Christian essential we have a right to press for an answer as to how we are to conceive of it in moral terms. I once knew a worshiper to leave a cathedral with his face alight with an ecstatic glow. The ecstasy proved to be æsthetic delight over the beauty of the tints in a stained glass window. I knew another worshiper almost to be carried out of himself by the glorious peals of a magnificent organ. Certainly I should be churlish if I entered objection to any of this. The world is richer because of such sensitive spirits, but this kind of worship is compatible with utter indifference to many of the Christian ethical essentials, though my saying so will seem like æsthetic blasphemy to many a beauty-loving soul. Still, the development and exercise in the worshiper of the appreciation of beauty is, as far as it goes, clear gain as compared with the vacuous mooning about which some frequenters of churches have seemed to conceive of as worship. We must admittedly develop the reverential spirit, but reverential toward what? We

must have a feeling of awe, but of awe toward what? If worship is the contemplation of any high spiritual attributes which call forth a feeling of reverence, well and good; but the one Christian question has always been as to whether the worshiper is any better or finer as a human being, after his worship than before? Understand, the improvement of the worshiper is not to be judged merely by utilitarian measures. Does the worship make the worshiper in any direction, or degree, a stronger or finer human being? The test of Christianity is the Christian. The Church has for the most part stood true to the demand for withdrawal from the world, and, for the most part too, with loyalty to the other demand that he who thus withdraws from the world must come back again to the world with his soul laden with riches from the spiritual country.

As a last field for illustration we look at the purpose of the Church throughout the centuries in her converting, missionary zeal. Here we find indeed that the Church has not always been animated by the highest goal in her attempt to extend her borders. There has at times been more appreciation of the need of extending the borders of the Church as an institution than of lifting men to a higher life. Nevertheless, the demand that the converted men, or the converted agencies, be larger and better after conversion than before has always

been implied in the Church's efforts to save the world. It is a peculiarity of Christian experience in any realm that the experience leaves the man larger after a crisis than before. Our Master's term new "birth" suggests inevitably the entrance into a world of larger life. A birth into a smaller sphere than that from which one came could hardly be looked upon as a birth at all.

Perhaps conversion is, when all is said, the most Christian of words, especially if we can guard against the narrowing tendencies that sometimes gather around it. If we take our Christianity seriously all our phrases have to be loaded with the implications which reach out toward increasing life. What is the mark of a genuinely Christian inspiration, what but the increased vitality and energy and quality of the inspired life? The old-time mistake as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, for example, had for its chief shortcoming that it tended to make men less instead of more. The more seriously one took the dogma of literal mechanical transmission in Scriptural revelations the meaner became our conceptions of the men to whom such revelation had to be made. No play was left for spiritual experiment, for testing out religious truth in life. The revelation was there and men could take it or leave it, and the most of them left it. A legitimate

instinctive resentment marks the attitude of men toward such alleged infallibilities. In one fashion or another the Church has always found a way to hold that rare and fine human qualities must somehow root in the Divine. It is instructive to contemplate the lengths to which the Church will go to save goodness, wherever found, for the kingdom of heaven. Even in the periods when the Church insisted upon sharp lines of division between the saved and the unsaved, she usually found a way of claiming all the good men as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Of course there is no denying that in her formal utterances the Church has not abated a jot nor a tittle of her insistence upon the definiteness of the separating line, but nevertheless the representatives of the Church have always drawn back from the assertion that a humanly good man is doomed to perdition. How often has the Church marked the close of the career of a humanly helpful self-sacrificing "outsider" with expressions of willingness to leave such cases in the "hands of God," which of course has meant that in the last analysis God would use some other standard of classification than that which the Church had set up.

One of the most inspiring moments at the Lausanne Conference in the summer of 1927 arrived during a discussion of the inclusiveness of the

Church, when Bishop Gore arose to remind the Conference that, though all the delegates were devoted churchmen, there were many persons outside of all churches who must nevertheless be counted as belonging to the body of Christ. He avowed his own belief that many agnostics, even many atheists, by their self-sacrificing devotion to truth show that they have the Spirit of Christ, and that in spite of their inability to accept Christ intellectually they have already accepted Christ in Spirit. Therefore they are of the Church of Christ. There was indeed some protest against this outspoken utterance, but everybody at the conference, outside of a meager minority, knew that Bishop Gore was merely stating aloud what churchmen had from the beginning been convinced of in the depths of their souls, namely, that whatever prompts to Christly action must be of Christ. Christianity simply will not throw anything good away. Somehow or other Christianity has to make place for genuine human worth. We assume that readers of the present day have got away from the distinction between natural good and supernatural good. A good man is good under any classification, and the goodness must be reckoned with.

I have attempted thus hastily to glance at fundamentally Christian moods significant for our pur-

pose. It is doubtful if the Church could have survived if it had not been for her bringing her activities to the test of human results, even when she did this unconsciously, or when she was disavowing any intention of such estimate. In the eras when the Church gave herself to courses desperately wrong, she saved herself from complete wreck by unconsciously holding back from going the full length of the absurdity or the monstrosity. She made human adjustments in human situations. Studying the history of the Church as a whole a rather full-orbed human ideal is seen to be shadowed forth. A noted historian once said that if we did not have the actual utterance of the Christian ideal in the New Testament, and in Christian writings, we should never suspect the ideal from the activity of the Church itself. The criticism has a measure of force, but not so much force as the author probably supposed. Taking the actual doings of the Church, which are admittedly more significant than any form of verbal pronouncement, we are surely correct in declaring that the activities themselves at least hint of a recognition of the worth of men as men. Even if in the study of Church history we should come upon no phrasing of the Christian ideal, I think we should have to recognize that the ideal of the good life as worth while on its own

account has been at work, and that men have supported Christianity in its institutions and its beliefs because of their recognition that Christianity does judge itself by what happens to the men who come under the influence of Christianity, the men being considered as human beings living in a human world.

Chapter III

INSTRUMENTALISM

It is sometimes instructive to hear what foreigners have to say about our country when they are talking us over among themselves. Some weeks ago I came upon a comment by a distinguished English philosopher concerning civilization in the United States, the comment published in a Latin-American newspaper. The philosopher seemed to be writing unreservedly out of full conviction. He declared that the one outstanding peculiarity of American thought and life is instrumentalism, though I am not sure that the Spanish expression could be translated back into English in just that term. The idea was that everything done in America is done, so to speak, as a means to something beyond the deed itself. The American thinks only of tools and of methods. This emphasis upon instrumental doing has brought to America its marvelous practical success, and that success has developed the limitations inherent in exclusive emphasis on method. It would seem that, according to this English observer, America has one end toward which to move, that end being, paradox-

ically enough, the incessant development of better methods in all phases of human activity; the ends become methods, and the methods, ends.

I think we may as well admit some cogency in this comment. The students of American history, under the leadership of Professor F. J. Turner, have taught us that the controlling and determining forces in our life as a people have come mostly out of contact with the western frontier. When European civilization found itself on the eastern fringe of our continent, it soon realized that to all practical intents and purposes it was cut off from Europe, and that it was confronted by the necessity of conquering the wilderness to the west. The victory over the wilderness between the Atlantic and the Pacific in the period, let us say, from the last decade of the eighteenth century to the first of the twentieth, was one of the most astonishing manifestations of human energy in the history of the human race. The problems presented by forests and streams and prairies and mountains, to say nothing of savages and wild beasts, were almost wholly new. Old world methods were of no avail. The pioneer had to invent his own means, and he invented them so skillfully that the American of pioneering spirit has come to feel that any material problem can be solved with patient attention to the development of the appropriate tools, and he al-

ways assumes that with a little search the tools can be found.

Professor Edward A. Ross has told us that the spectacular increase in attendance upon educational institutions in this country, especially upon state universities, has been due to the passing away of the old frontier. Naturally the western movement had to stop when it reached the shores of the Pacific. Thereupon the American youth had to turn in other directions for shaping out careers of success, and those directions led to the more scientific mastery of the forces of nature. Any student of educational trends in this country since the beginning of the present century will notice the predominance of what we may call tool-studies. The emphasis is on laboratory training as a means to conquer the physical world, and upon the instrumental phases of mathematics, mathematical formulas themselves being regarded as instruments. A university library is likely to be to-day an intellectual shop, where all manner of devices put the student quickly in control of information which can readily be made available for his instrumental purposes. It is no longer the retreat where leisurely readers browse about for the sake of reading itself. If the present-day student masters a foreign language he is likely to do so out of belief in the practical benefit of the accomplishment.

The entire field of our political endeavor also shows the mark of the frontiersmen's spirit. The aim of lawmakers has been to deal with immediate urgent situations, without much consideration for law conceived of as an end in itself. We have indeed latterly shown something of a tendency to exalt the Constitution as an object of devotion on its own account, but a little scrutiny reveals that even this exhortation is, so to speak, instrumental because of discernible altogether matter-of-fact motives. The current call, in some quarters, for one-hundred-per-cent patriotism does not by any means imply that we have established a cult of patriotism as such. With us constitutions and laws are tools pointing to something beyond themselves, though we are not always sure at just what they do point.

Out of our total intellectual and spiritual inclination has come pragmatism, which we find it necessary to mention so often in these addresses, the doctrine that the truth of a belief, or a theory, is to be judged by its results. The formulators of pragmatism included in their interpretation of their results high types of spiritual effects, but the tendency of the pragmatic system itself is to get the sharpest accent on material outcomes. I do not think we can get away from the charge that Ameri-

can thinking does show this definitely instrumental characteristic.

Even when we look to those activities which seem to be ends in themselves, such as the contemplation of beauty and truth for their own sakes, we find that at bottom the aim is to produce through the contemplation of beauty and truth a state of mind. These states range all the way from what the noisy and self-expressive youth of to-day calls "kicks" to the thrill which a profound mathematician of our time tells us he receives from the solution of the more intricate mathematical problems. There is always a human reference in our search even for the truth and beauty which seem most valid in themselves. Truth is truth indeed, but in every search for truth there is the selective interest of the truth-seeker. We hear on the one side that our best insights are reached through the exercise of the will-to-believe; and on the other side that these same insights arise out of the will-not-to-believe, all of which prompts the surmise that back of our search for knowledge is the human mind itself, picking out of the world of knowledge or of theory what it needs for its own gratification. Such forms of knowledge we call spiritual food, or air, but these forms are instrumental as ministering to the needs of the life hungry intellectually, or morally, or spiritually. Though we do strive for

the instrumental we are always paying conscious or unconscious tribute to the human as the end which the instrumental serves.

We have already had occasion to speak of the sound instinct of the Church in some of its e er-recurrent attitudes toward the world. For further illustration of this same instinct, let us glance at a few religious activities which are evidently instrumental as soon as we subject them to any close scrutiny. Suppose we begin with the Church itself. Is it not possible to make a distinction between the Church as the body of believers, and the various institutional agencies through which that body of believers works? If such distinction is permissible is it not clear that the sacredness of the Church inheres in the body of believers? We may even widen our conception of this body to make it include the believers of the past, and the believers in the days to come. Those of the past are now dead. Nevertheless we may say that their work was of such consequence that we may well keep them in memory in our present activities; and admittedly we have distinct obligations toward the persons who are to come after us. It is quite possible to make a sound argument for the claim that a democracy is to keep in view not only the persons now living, but also those who have passed on, and those who are still to come. I wish to insist that I

am not thinking of the sacredness of the Body of Christ as limited to those actually living in an earthly existence at any one moment. Let us concede that the sacred body is the group of persons throughout the total course of the history of the Church.

There is the other angle however from which to contemplate the Church, namely, as the body of institutional creeds, rituals, and practical methods of spreading Christianity. All these are to be judged by the effectiveness with which they minister to the life of the persons composing the Church. The first fact that strikes us as we look abroad over Christendom is the divided state of the Church, the cleavages between Catholicism and Protestantism, and the split-up condition of Protestantism. In all our arguments about Church unity it may be just as well for us to hold to the question as to the effect of unity on the one hand, or of disunity on the other, upon the lives of those composing the Church, present and to come, and upon the effectiveness of the impact which the Church is to make upon the world. In its organizational aspects the Church must be looked at as instrumental, and the question is as to whether the community of persons which we collectively think of as the Body of Christ is better ministered to by separate denominational entities, or by unified or-

ganization. Hardly anyone would doubt to-day that fundamentally the Church, as a community of persons devoted to Christ, has attained to such unity as entitles us to speak of it as one, but nevertheless the divisions are so sharp that we must think of the oneness as consisting only in the inner spirit. I do not think it is fair to speak of the members of the Body of Christ as warring one against another. The divisions into which Christendom has shattered itself are indeed to be judged by the test as to whether they beget a spirit of hate or of discord which contradicts the ideal of brotherhood which should obtain in the Christian body. If division tends to such discord, it is wrong; but if the practical effect of the division is to work out to the full the different phases of Christian development, our condemnation of sectarianism has to limit itself to asking how well such sectarianism has wrought as a tool. We may say all we please about comprehensiveness and inclusiveness of Christian view, but Christians are human, and human nature runs to specialization.

In actual human history we do not grasp the total consequences of a belief merely by studying its logic. We attain to that full understanding as some group seizes the belief and works it out into a degree of practical realization. In the political realm the existence of small states has sometimes

been justified on the ground that such small units supply opportunity for testing out social methods which might not get a chance in a larger political organism, or which, if they got freer rein, might run to harmful extremes before the harmfulness could be checked. The justification of the numerousness of states in the American Union is often based on similar argument, a possibility of experimenting with social measures in restricted localities before adopting them for the wider areas. So it may be with denominationalism. Some ideas have been brought to their best effectiveness as groups of religious specialists, so to speak, have developed them to extremes. I do not think it would be possible to over-estimate the importance of the service of denominationalism, in the era just closing, for thus developing different aspects of Christian teaching. It is somewhat as if a university professor, anxious to cultivate a fresh field of research, assigned to seminar students each a different plot of the field for complete exploitation.

The illustrations I am suggesting, however, point beyond the continuance of the broken-up fragmentariness of Christianity. The states of our nation are tied together in a federal unity, and the students in a seminar submit their results to the criticism of a group presided over by a professor. Keeping close to our instrumental standpoint we

may well believe that the period of greatest possibility for denominational achievement has closed, and that we must now look forward to some form of federated union. In all our discussion, however, we do well to hold to the ideal of increased effectiveness. To tell masses of believing worshipers that they are sinners because they are denominationalists, and that they should bow themselves in sackcloth and ashes therefor is extreme. A little later I shall have something to say about the need of keeping alive a spirit of intolerance—this intolerance, however, an intolerance only against evil or mistaken methods. Moreover, in spite of the excesses to which denominationalism has run, some way will always have to be found in a united church to continue the functions now conceived of as a duty of the separate organizations. Increase of size and quality in human life means increasing diversity, and diversity means division for discussion, at least. Probably there will be as much argument back and forth between parties in the united church as now goes on between the separate denominations. Indeed it will be sad if such is not the case. Probably the outsiders can always charge Christianity with divisions in itself, but some divisions will be signs of health. We are surely within sight of the day, however, when the differences should be the differences inside of a federation, for

on the inside there is more chance of articulating the differences into some measure of coöperation.

Formulations of belief, too, must be approached from the instrumental basis. It is interesting to note the course of the history of some creedal pronouncements. At the outset a creed has usually been shaped with a predominately practical intent. Some have been in the nature of compromise for the sake of allowing opponents to get together and to live under the same ecclesiastical roof. This has been especially true in the realm of interpretation of creed. The actual phrases may after a debate stand unchanged, but opposing sides are by common consent permitted to interpret the phrases as they please. So that the creed becomes a platform on which men can stand together, as over against the world whose forces in opposition to Christianity have usually been unified. Again, there have been periods in the history of the Church when creeds have been instruments of warfare. The Apostles' Creed itself was in the beginning, as every student of Church history will admit, at least partly intended to offset the belief that Christ did not share real manhood. Throughout all the centuries phrases from the Creed have lent themselves very handily upon occasion to purposes of offense and defense. Again, creeds have been like monuments, marking out a victory, or like mile-posts on Chris-

tianity's journey. The Nicene Creed, especially, seems to have been construed as both a monument of victory and a milepost. Its defenders have maintained that it signalized a triumph over a heresy and supplied a point of departure for sounder progress. In a scholastic era the creeds came to be looked upon as final formulas of absolute truths, but quite often they seem to have been used as whetstones on which dialecticians sharpened their logical knives. Once more, creeds have come to be looked upon as symbols. They are signs of truth which nobody can express. They belong to the domain of poetry, and some to-day even insist that they should not be recited as utterances of belief but sung as emotional intonations of a mood. No two ideas could be farther apart than the assumption of the old-time creed-interpreter that a creed is a precise formulation, and the later conception that a creed is a hymn; but the two conceptions are alike in that both are instrumental, and are to be judged by the spiritual life which they foster.

We come next to a theme about which there is more room for strenuous debate, namely, the sacraments. Even here, however, we must remember that the sacraments have been customarily spoken of as "means of grace." As these pages are being written the ecclesiastical world is stirred with a controversy as to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I refer to the battle in the House of Commons in England over the divine presence in the elements of the Lord's Supper. One reared outside the channel of Roman Catholic, or of Anglo-Catholic tradition, is not qualified to understand the mood of the worshiper who sees in the sacramental wafer and wine the veritable presence of our Lord, but even here how can we escape the conclusion that any just interpretation would look upon the sacramental elements as instruments for spiritual life? Granting to the sacramentalist that a miracle is wrought in bread and wine we have still to ask whether a miracle may not be a means toward an end. All defenses of New Testament miracles with which I am familiar conceive of them as instruments. They are recorded as tending to deepen belief, or to manifest the power of God as revealed in Jesus and the Apostles, the power being manifested for the good of men. While I myself do not have the slightest inclination to accept the Anglo-Catholic conception, I am willing, just for the sake of the argument, to concede that the Lord Christ may be actually present in sacramental wafer and wine, but if he is thus present what can we say but that he is using wafer and wine as instruments through which to come into touch with his followers? Even if he were present in human form

what could we say but that he was using the bodily presence for the sake of a spiritual communion?

Everything comes back to the spiritual result. At the famous Lausanne Conference I heard a European churchman say in a committee meeting that the elements consecrated for use in the Communion are so filled with miraculous efficacy that if a man should partake of them accidentally or unwillingly he would nevertheless be miraculously benefited. Now let us see where this leaves us. If such benefit is spiritual does not the churchman's utterance imply that a man can be made good when he prefers to be bad? The only way we can utilize such a doctrine for genuinely spiritual interests is to maintain that the miracle is virtually an opening of blind eyes, but can blind eyes be made to see spiritual realities without spiritual consent on the part of the seer? I happen to know that the churchman who announced the above doctrine is most worthy and devout, but my own guess is that, belonging to an organization which has many instrumentalities to keep alive moral insight and human righteousness apart from the sacrament interpreted thus miraculously, he is attributing to the sacrament a spiritual benefit reached through more spiritual exercise than his statement about miracle would imply. As for the Roman Church, that is an enormously human institution, and as such

achieves a huge sum of human result by humanly qualifying and interpreting her own notion of the miraculous. Altogether apart from the miraculous, Rome does keep the glorified Redeemer at the focus of the worshiper's vision. "Knees on the floor, eyes on the altar, heart in heaven." This is positively thrilling to any devout soul, whether he believes in a miraculous sacrament or not. The entire technique of Roman Catholic worship has been consciously or unconsciously fashioned as a means to an end. If in the hands of some administrants lower ends get in the way of spiritual ends, that ought not to obscure the instrumental nature of the services. The only possible justification of any ritual is the good of the user of the ritual. The idea back of communion itself is that of an instrument through which the Spirit of Christ can reach the spirit of the communicant. We must not forget that no matter how sacred an instrument in itself may seem to be, any instrument is an instrument and must be judged by what it does. The one purpose of all Christianity is fullness and fineness of human life.

Chapter IV

CHRISTIAN INTOLERANCE

From admitted instrumentalism a surprising conclusion has commonly been drawn, namely, that we should forthwith enter upon a new era of tolerance because Christian differences are so largely concerned with instruments. We may well rejoice that we live in an era of tolerance, but it is well also for us to keep the grounds of our tolerance definitely in the open. Here again the distinction between persons as ends in themselves and instruments for the development of persons is the essential. The tolerance should be for persons. We should rejoice in the growth of the respect for human beings as such which makes it increasingly difficult to get a hearing for denunciations of, or contempt for, human beings.

If any organization is erected into an end on its own account, then of course we feel free to proceed to any extremities we please in dealing with persons who are less sacred than the organization. If, for example, a state as such bent on the realization of its own selfish policies, is in position to enforce its will upon its subjects, it may soon bring about

a plight in which human beings can be regarded as so much cannon fodder. Or, if an industrial system gets into its hands complete power over the lives of workmen, that system can indeed classify with contempt workers as a "labor mass," or as a group of "hands." So also if a Church in its organizational aspects falls into the control of leaders or rulers who use the organization for their own designs, or even for the purpose of setting on high the sacredness of the organization in itself, we reach the unchristian pass in which the members of the Church are thrust into the inferior place, with only secondary claim to consideration. It is incalculable gain for civilization that in the past few centuries the recognition of the worth of men as men has supplanted the conception of the worth of institutions on their own account.

The Reformation under Martin Luther made at least a beginning toward the just emphasis on the worth of the individual believer. The philosophy of Immanuel Kant definitely established the human being at the center of the moral kingdom—Kant explicitly declaring that the human being is an end in himself never to be exploited as an instrument. Political and social upheavals like the French Revolution and the American Revolution have done much to impress this same standard of values on the common thinking. In practice we are a long

distance from fulfilling any human ideal, but it is important to recognize the growing regard for the sacredness of individual persons. Toward persons as such, we rejoice that there is growing tolerance.

Why, however, should tolerance necessarily be extended to instruments? Instruments are impersonal, even after they have become closely entwined with significant human sentiments. Out of regard for persons a reformer will not lightly or flippantly treat instruments sacred to those persons. Nevertheless, we cannot allow the sacredness of instruments in the eyes of users of the instruments to blind our eyes to the need of something at times approaching intolerance toward instruments. In practical concerns in civilized communities we no longer tolerate instruments whose social harmfulness is apparent, no matter how sacred some of these instruments may seem. A poet once sang most touchingly of the Old Oaken Bucket, the iron-bound bucket, the moss-covered bucket that hung in the well. Such a well, and such a bucket, may have once done service in rural communities sparsely populated, though moss on a bucket is always a bad sign. No amount of poetic devotion would be likely to convince any intelligent present-day community that the water supplies in populous centers should depend upon the old-fashioned well. We should expect any health officer to become furi-

ously intolerant at the hint of opening such a possible center of infection. We can likewise become sentimental about the devotion of the old-time country physician to his rough-and-ready methods of treating all sorts of diseases. We do not indeed interfere with an individual's choosing those old-time remedies for himself, but if a doctor of to-day should appear before a medical examining board and ask for a license to practice medicine on the basis of the methods of a half-century ago he would be met by something much like intolerance. So also in the educational sphere. The little red schoolhouse is an emblem and symbol of an educational method once valid in American communities, but if anybody should propose to restore in our modern schools the methods employed in the little red schoolhouse entire communities would arise in intolerant outcry. In all these realms the sacredness of the instrument is dependent upon its success in realizing a sacred aim. The physician's methods have to meet the test as to what happens to the patient. The school has to answer the question as to what happens to the pupil who goes to the school. The methods in any sphere of social contact are thrown to the scrap heap as soon as others can be discovered or invented which better minister to human welfare.

This leads us to the task immediately before the

Church, namely, a skeptical scrutiny of all ecclesiastical methods, and intolerance toward those that fall short. The very sacredness of the aim of religious endeavor impels us to be severe toward tools, methods, organizations. All this becomes the more evident as soon as we look at the terms used to describe religious activities. We say of a man's theological conceptions that they are merely his way of approach to religious problems. While we admit that nobody would be warranted in any fussy interference in a man's way of approach to religion, nevertheless is it not a duty in any intelligent community to point out that there are different degrees of excellence as to ways? We have something to learn from English debaters at this point. The English have learned to unique degree how to draw the line between personal and impersonal in controversial discussion, and to turn the whole force of their intolerance upon the impersonal. The American's resentment at much that an English controversialist will say indicates how far the American still has to go in mastering this distinction.

We speak of religious doctrine as the food upon which the soul lives, and then we decline to make suggestion as to spiritual food, whereas no subject should be more freely and frankly discussed. The old adage tells us that there is no disputing about

tastes, but there is certainly dispute enough about the basic qualities of foods. Here again nobody is to attempt any compulsion. Every man is to be left free to eat what he pleases, but everybody has a right to say what he thinks about the values of food. In an age when those who sell food print lists of calories on bills of fare, there is not much sense in seeking to withdraw food topics from discussion. Nobody can be compelled to pay heed to a calory scale, but we need the scales nevertheless. A worthy friend of mine used always to boast of his approach to religious problems as "his own." He seemed to feel that nobody dared to say a word about that road because it was his, but the road's being his did not make it a good road, and did not do away with the need of public discussion of the roughness and crookedness and swampiness of the road when he recommended it for the spiritual traveling of others. No, an instrument is an instrument, and is always legitimate theme for discussion and criticism. The more sacred the object for which the instrument exists, the more searching should be the inquiry of socially minded religious workers toward the instrument.

We have heard much recently about the modern approach to Biblical study. It would seem that a kingdom of Heaven which professes to rest upon truth as one of its corner stones ought not to be

afraid of truth. In this pragmatic hour results in life are regarded as tests of the truth of religious conceptions. We believe that whatever makes life true cannot be at its own center false. The question then becomes as to what view, or views, of the Scriptures produce the best types of religious life. With any such question there must be wide liberty of answer, but in the main one argument for the modern scientific method is that it makes the Scripture revelations more useful. Part of this usefulness arises out of tracing in the Scriptures themselves this very distinction between instrument and end, of which I have been making so much. The New Testament has something to say about the need of separating chaff from wheat, the wheat to be eaten and the chaff to be burned. Chaff is an instrument which has served its day, or its season, in the growth of the spiritual grain. There would not have been wheat if there had not been chaff, but chaff serves its purpose in making possible the wheat, which in turn serves its purpose by ministering to men's lives. The Bible contains many conceptions which are now chaff. In a former day they served as a protecting shield around growing grain. What we now call the chaff of ancient interpretations of the physical universe protected the growing revelation of God as a moral being. What we now call the chaff of old-time laws and customs,

protected the budding germ of the realization of human worth. Wheat is not useful until it has been threshed. Now all our modern methods of Biblical study are to be viewed from their success in thus threshing out for us the seed of the truth.

So it must be also with the entire problem of religious education. The old method used to lay chief stress on the mere utterance of the truth. My own memory goes back to a childhood when the Church seemed to imagine that the proclamation of the truth itself was all that was necessary. It is odd that somebody did not notice that this was out of harmony with what we may call the psychological hints thrown out in the speech and practice of Jesus. In the light of Jesus's own example there ought to have been earlier appropriation of the truth that the human life is like a field in which organic growth goes forward according to organic laws. When is truth uttered? It is uttered when the receiving mind is prepared to receive it; and when it is uttered, it is received after the manner of the mind receiving. Which means that any methods which make the mind better and finer tend toward better and finer grasp of the truth. For the sake of the mind itself, then, there is every reason for discussion of the values of methods of religious training.

A word may be in order as to present-day em-

phasis on tolerance of non-Christian systems. We may well congratulate ourselves that we have to come to recognize the worth of individuals even when those individuals are outside the Christian system. There have been periods when missionary effort has been construed as a formal proclaiming to all the nations of the Gospel of Christ for the sake of hastening Christ back to earth, to reign mostly for the benefit of those who had accepted him previous to his return. The preaching thus becomes a sort of formality to be gone through as a prerequisite of the second coming without primary regard to the welfare of the so-called heathen themselves. Again, there has been missionary effort out of loyalty to Christ's word. Inasmuch as Christ commanded men to preach the Gospel throughout the world the Gospel ought to be preached. Very often this duty has been urged without any prolonged consideration of the results of the preaching on the non-Christian lands themselves. Then, again, Western religious institutions have been honored as sacred, without any regard to their adaptability to non-Christian minds. Here also the chief function of the converted heathen was too often conceived to be merely the reception of Western Christianity as a thing in itself. We may well rejoice that, because of the growth of more humane ideas in Christian lands, and because of the

worth of human values as insisted upon by the non-Christians themselves, there is to-day as never before the recognition of the human claims of the non-Christian peoples. It is a sad commentary on our Christianity that this realization did not fully dawn upon us until after so many of the so-called heathen peoples had themselves insisted upon their human rights.

Just now the tendency has swung to the other extreme—we are using our doctrine of instrumentalism to teach that the non-Christian conceptions are as good as any in Christianity. Here again we are extending our growing mood for toleration, which should always hold toward human beings, over into the instrumental realm. Non-Christian conceptions must be scrutinized just as are our Christian conceptions. They must be judged by their results in individual and social life. If Christian theologies possess no inherent sacredness which can stop us from studying them critically, surely non-Christian conceptions have no such sacredness. When we find India, for example, steeped through and through with religious conceptions which touch daily life in every least phase, we have a right to appraise Indian religion by its day-by-day outcome. When we hear that China is so given over to ancestor worship that for the sake of having sons to care for the ancestors the Chinese people bring forth

five generations of human beings during a period in which only four generations ought to be produced, considering the material resources of the country, are we to be held back by the demand for tolerance from free discussion of ancestor worship in its instrumental effects? The entire African continent is saddled with belief in witchcraft. Witches may not ride broomsticks, but they certainly ride African minds. Granted that any human problem has to be approached with decent respect for the opinions of mankind, does such decency mean that we cannot point out the inadequacy, not to say the deadliness, of such spiritual instruments?

We can well appreciate the sensitiveness of the non-Christian peoples when their beliefs are held up to what seems to them to be ridicule, for the non-Christian knows out of bitter experience that it is usually he himself who is the object of the ridicule. The more important, however, the life of the non-Christian becomes in the eyes of the Christian, the more urgently will the Christian insist that the spiritual tools by which the non-Christian works, and the spiritual foods on which he lives are not to be exempt from criticism. Here again the problem is not one of forcing anything on anybody. Calling attention to the inadequacy of non-Christian spiritual foods does not mean that Chris-

tianity is to resort to forced spiritual feeding. The elementary considerations, nevertheless, having to do with human moral necessities, call for outright and forthright free discussion. I know a country which was once subject to recurrent epidemics of typhus. The inhabitants of that land used to resent the statements of outside scientists that typhus was transmitted by the body louse. They protested that such a theory was an insult to their fair land, and then went on to declare that typhus came out of a miasma in the air, and that there was an herb peculiar to the country itself which acted as a potent cure. Now nobody from outside that I know of proposed that the neighboring nations organize a campaign to move in upon the typhus-stricken land and destroy body lice, but the scientists kept on insisting that the vermin were the carriers of the disease nevertheless. The vermin went on carrying typhus until the people themselves adopted the scientific teaching and the scientific method in fighting the pestilence. I am aware that this illustration itself would be the deadliest insult to some non-Christians, as implying the havoc-making nature of their religions, but such havoc must be looked at squarely. Mr. Gandhi informs the world that he yields to none in his reverence for the sacred cow. Mr. Gandhi would probably himself disavow any intention of making

the cow a more sacred object of regard than a human being, but the historic effect of believing in the sacredness of cows seems to be that such belief results in the comparative nonsacredness of human beings. We hear that all that India intends in cow-worship is to give place to the gods of fertility; but how has the worship of such gods resulted in the course of human history? Stripped of all their grosser abominations and viewed at their best, such beliefs make far too severe a pressure of human population upon the food resources of the over-populated land. Again, India provides room for the worship of elemental forces of nature in various fatalistic theological doctrines. What is the social effect of fatalism?

There is abroad to-day a teaching that inasmuch as these various beliefs are natural products of the non-Christian way of thinking the non-Christians should be left in undisturbed possession of them. We are informed that the religious beliefs of the heathen are just as good for the heathen as are the doctrines of the Christian for the Christian—that not belief but life is the essential anyhow, whereas beliefs are being increasingly shown to be decisive factors in the daily lives of those who hold the beliefs. Some have indeed told us that the myths of various peoples have merely an intellectual significance, that they are naïve devices for answering

queries of the childishly curious concerning natural phenomena. Study at first hand, however, seems to indicate that such myths enter into even the least deeds of daily existence. The god who is conceived of as described in myth must be placated literally at every turn of the road. If we were dealing only with children's guesses at the riddles of existence we might perhaps sit by in interested amusement and listen to fantastic stories of heathen gods, but if we are sincerely concerned for human beings there cannot be much amusement as we contemplate the non-Christian world. I suppose that few would maintain that we ought to withhold Western science from Oriental lands, if the Orientals can be brought to accept that science. Face to face with actualities we have to admit that the religious notions of non-Christian lands are so closely connected with daily human conduct as to be in part veritable causes of physical disease.

Some years ago a prominent American scientist protested against missionary effort in so-called heathen countries because such effort destroys or spoils cultural systems which are of significance for scientific study of human society. It will require long generations of research, it appears, to fathom all the wisdom embodied in some of the social structures. We must indeed have every sympathy with a genuinely scientific aim, but what are we to say

of so cold-blooded a proposition as this? What should we say of a scientist who might wish to keep some forms of human disease always in existence for the light such diseases throw on the problem of disease in general? There would be even more justification for such a proposal than for this of preserving cultural forms, no matter what the cost to those living under such cultures. The particular scientist I have in mind used to say that the so-called heathen did not care to be disturbed anyhow. We insist that we are not trying to force Christianity on anyone, but we urge also that the very genius of Christianity reveals itself in the willingness of the Christian to share his Christianity with others. The suggestion that we do all we can to keep heathen systems in existence for the lessons they teach is after all diabolically selfish. The scientist's proposal is made with the interest of the scientist himself in mind. Subjection of a Central African tribe to wretched religions for the sake of the instructiveness of those religions to an outsider, is worse than the industrial subjection of Africans to barbarous labor conditions for the profit of outside capitalists. Of course we may be met at any time with the announcement that the heathen's religious conceptions are as good for him as our conceptions are for us. This is one of those bits of silly nonsense which always miss the essential point.

The wisdom here is about on a parity with the remark that the music of the African's tomtom is as good for him as our highly developed orchestral systems are for us.

All that I have said in this chapter about the distinction between the instrument and the person who is the end which gives the instrument its significance is based on the demand that no person is to use another person as an instrument. There is nothing to forbid the idea that a man may properly look upon his own life as possibly of instrumental usefulness. A man may indeed seek to make his own life in all its activities a tool or an inspiration for his fellows. Or he may even at times seem lost in brooding absorption over forces which are altogether impersonal. This may however merely mean that as he thus loses himself he finds himself again in greater power, the power to be used for the community of human beings, that community being construed as an end in itself.

Chapter V

SOCIETY AND THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM

The current emphasis on the social application of the principles of Christianity in the name of the largest and finest human possibilities still encounters in various forms the objection based on the claim that Christianity aims primarily at individuals. It is pointed out to us with wearisome frequency that society is a group of individuals, and that these individuals are not so related to one another as to bestow upon the notion of society as an organism more than figurative value. Some years ago a distinguished American philosopher disposed of social institutions as such with a flourish to the effect that if we take individual men out of the institutions nothing is left. Since we are always hearing so much about the significance of the individual for Christianity it may be just as well for us occasionally to inquire into the meaning of institutional and other social activities for the welfare of individuals.

We freely concede that there is nothing in society apart from the individuals composing society, but

we must forthwith remind ourselves that we never come upon an individual apart from society, that if we ever should come upon an individual who had never known society we should find a creature barely entitled to be called an individual, or even a human being for that matter, and we should have to reflect that as soon as we met such an individual he would come into social relation, by the meeting itself, to at least one other member of society. It is altogether likely that if we could take all the individuals out of an institution, not much would be left of the institution; but it is also likely that we shall never come upon individuals who have not been shaped by social institutions. These social relationships are the most potent factors in leading individuals to personal development.

Admitting that institutions are nothing apart from the individuals composing them, we have an angle from which to discuss the so-called environmental factors in the development of men. How often have we heard that it is not quite Christian to lay stress on the force of environment in shaping character! How often are we told that we cannot make men good by changing the circumstances in which they live! The redemptive work, to use the old-time expression, must be done in the inner realm through the surrender of the individual's will to the Divine Will. When those who lay stress on

what they call Christian individualism begin to talk thus, they usually speak as if environmental forces were physical, like houses and streets and factories. By a sort of smuggled-in implication they put the house in which a man lives, or the factory in which he works, by the side of the natural forces, such as the air that he breathes or the land in which he resides. It is odd to note that the same persons who call upon the Christians to triumph over adverse natural forces in the name of the spirit, often protest most noisily when some preacher pronounces against bad houses and evil working conditions. These latter seem to be the determining environmental forces. Time and again official ecclesiastics have called upon laborers to submit to such conditions with the consolation that Heaven after all is our home, and that it is not a Christian duty to seek to save ourselves by changing the environment in the earthly home.

Confronted as we are repeatedly by such exhortations, it is in order to note that a large part of the environment under which men in modern communities live is man-made. A house is in itself merely a physical creation, but if it is built for the profit of the owner and not for the welfare of the inhabitant, the selfishness of that owner wrought out into wood and brick is the most potent environmental influence through about half the time of the inhabitant's

life. If a factory is likewise constructed chiefly with the profits of the owners in mind, that factory, physical as it is, is possibly the most powerful single influence in the daily life of thousands of men. Back of the physical fact stands the human fact of the greed of some men whose shadows thus cast themselves across the pathway of their employees. Few Christian individualists would object to the Scriptural doctrine that evil communications corrupt good manners, or prevent men from having any manners at all. Evil communications can take place through an evilly constructed environment, the environment being the expression of human wills. Even from the point of view of the individualist, then, is there not full Christian warrant for seeking to convert to righteousness and justice the makers of environment? We repeat that a wide section of human environment is man-made. The duty of Christianity is to proclaim a message to the makers of environment.

At this juncture some individualist forgets his individualism long enough to remind us that these individual makers of environment are not personally responsible, that they are caught in the meshes of a system, that their personal intentions are upright, and their personal regrets are profound when the system works with such admitted injustice. In other words the individualist con-

cedes that no matter how individual a maker of environment may be, as soon as he unites with other makers of environment he acts in a way different from his conduct in the more narrow personal relation. This leads us pretty far. We are forced at once to admit that men acting in groups develop points of view and policies of conduct different from those of their ordinary, more strictly personal contacts. Has then Christianity no message for men in these contacts in which the theory of the world, and of moral life, and of human values is at times utterly at odds with what the same men would hold in other relationships? Here we come upon that fundamental contradiction which is such an embarrassment for Christianity. The distinctive feature of Christianity is that Christians are supposed to move always in the direction of the highest human ideals, the ideals being stated with an increasing appreciation of the human values. Christians are not more religious than believers in non-Christian religions. There is more religion as such in many a little village of India than in many a big city in America. The difference is that the Indian religion concerns itself with swarms of ritualistic or semi-ritualistic performances of no especial moral worth, whereas Christianity is either moral or nothing. If now Christianity acquiesces in injustice which men perpetrate institutionally, and insists in

the same breath upon devotion to a growing moral ideal, it is split by a deadly contradiction. Christianity cannot be a halfway religion. It must aim at all or nothing. That is to say, it must insist that the conversion of men must extend to their institutional activities. When the individualist so far forgets himself as to declare that in institutional spheres men cannot act unless they all act together, the Christian prophet is entitled to reply: "Very well. Then let us subject the men all together to the play of a force which acts upon them all, the force of an aroused public opinion." If the individualists protest against this we point out that it is passing strange that a Christian should protest against the development of Christian public sentiment.

The basal consideration is that men do act differently in groups from the ways in which they act separately. We see this most strikingly when a group of men, any one of whom is an upright citizen when considered by himself, becomes a tigerish mob when under the influence of some common excitement which has stirred the lower layers of the human character, and has called out into activity animal ferocities long since forgotten or unsuspected. If the group spirit can thus roil up the baser sedimentary deposits, cannot it also arouse the individuals up to the tapping of the higher

levels of spirit? And is it not a function of Christianity to reach upward to these loftier realms of power?

Perhaps we are not ready just now, however, for such a consideration. For the moment let us look at something closer to the earth. The individualist keeps telling us that it is the duty of Christianity to teach men to mind their own business. By this is meant the abstinence from interference in the business of other people, and absorbed devotion to our own affairs. Our exhorter seeks to make it plain to us that if we are to talk about social service at all, the best social service is rendered as each of us makes the most and best he can of himself, the total thus contributed by the individuals far outweighing the contributions through so-called professedly social service.

We have no desire to file objection here. We concede that the greatest good can come to society if men will in this fine spirit attend each to his own business, but we insist that men can best attend to their own business as their own if they get together for the purpose of doing together what can most effectively be done together. We easily take fright to-day at the word "socialism," but one manifestation of socialism lies at our own doors, namely, the street upon which we walk, or the road upon which we ride. My own memory goes back to the period

when in some rural sections of the United States the care and upkeep of roads were left to a considerable degree to the individuals dwelling along those roads. The farmers in some localities that I once knew were not willing to tax themselves enough to turn the care of the roads over to properly equipped experts who would give them all their time. Each farmer "worked out" a loosely estimated obligation to keep in repair the roads nearest his own land. In other words it was everybody's business individually to look after the roads. Nobody was supposed to criticize his neighbor's work on the highway. The result can well be left to the imagination. The roads took an undue amount of the farmers' efforts away from their more legitimate tasks in their fields, to say nothing of the loss in getting the crops over bad roads to market. When the belated farmers at last got around to a commonly accepted taxation and turned over the roads to experts, they began to have time to mind their own business. This homely illustration is capable of being applied in many different directions. Coöperative agencies provide for doing together the things that can best be done together, while leaving individuals free to do separately what they can best do separately. This does not necessarily mean that the sphere of the individual is increasingly diminished. Individuals thus left to themselves for separate activi-

ties find ways of expanding that circle just as an inventor left to himself finds each new discovery constantly suggesting others. Again, there are those who develop expertness in the service of the institutions themselves. By minding the institutional activities they mind their own business in the sense that Ulysses minded his own business when he drew his own bow. The bow was intended to serve the group to which he belonged, but nobody in that group could bend Ulysses's bow except Ulysses himself.

The consideration of the relation of Christianity to all this problem suggests at once the higher goods for which Christianity stands. Present-day social philosophers are making it clear to us that there is an immense range of goods beyond those material things which so call forth the acquisitive, possessive and competitive forces in human nature. The more cold-blooded, materialistically inclined industrialist of to-day indeed tells us that the existence of society gives the individualist his chance, in that it supplies him a mass of material upon which to work. He admits that there are hardships and even evils in the present industrial order, let us say, but he points to the mighty captains of industry who have been developed by the system. In rare moments of something approaching emotional glow the industrialist tells us that

these leaders are worth having on their own account, and as factors of the world's life and history. Admitting the immense forces developed in the captains of a nation-wide industry we have to ask ourselves whether a captain as such, is worth purchasing at any price, to say nothing of such a price as that required to produce a captain of modern competitive industry. A certain type of historian is fond of reminding us that the system of American slavery, now admittedly evil, did indeed produce hardship at one end of the scale but that it flowered out in marvelous characters, like Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. It is somewhat of a strain to see the dependence of either Lee or Jackson on slavery as such; but admitting for the sake of the argument the dependence, and conceding the attitude which these heroes were almost inevitably forced to take toward a system in which they lived, we should not be willing to-day to allow slavery to return, even if we could see that it would produce scores of Lees and Jacksons. Great as they might be, they would not be worth the cost. As for captains like Napoleon Bonaparte, we may as well remark that the world has not yet got through paying for Napoleon. No, the word captain is unpleasantly suggestive as applied to the flowering out of social processes. It implies too much the mentality of docility in the followers.

Important industrial leaders have again and again declared that for the best results in industry there must always be a margin of unemployed, a reserve source upon which employers can call in times of extra need for workers, and a reservoir into which those workers can be discharged as soon as their services are no longer needed. "Reserves" and "reservoirs" are parts of system. If modern employers want such reserves and reservoirs they should pay for them. Any such suggestion however meets the amazed outcry that this course would be to sin against individualism, by taking away from the individual the incentives which come from fear of unemployment, and the initiative which comes from the search for jobs.

In the matter-of-fact realm of money-making, society has gone to heavy costs to make possible the success of individuals, too heavy a cost to be subjected to the human wastage which much of modern industry involves. A community at all organized has road systems, police systems, common schools, organization of money and credit, to say nothing of the various phases of the legal structure. Touch any one of these and you at once affect the power of individuals everywhere throughout the system to make money. The very fact that human beings live together in communities gives money-makers, honest and dishonest, their chance.

For its own sake and the sake of the money-making individuals, society must expect of Christianity some message bearing upon those social activities which touch the life of every man into whose hands money comes. It is too much to say that all kinds of money-making institutions, good and bad, seek to control these general social creations for the sake of the benefit of their own particular class; but society has a right to insist that there are at least three parties to every business transaction—and to every human transaction for that matter—the two parties immediately involved in the transaction, and the general social body of which the other two are a part. By general social body we mean the inter-related total of persons living in a given community. These are men and women and children. None of these parties can be left out of the account if Christianity is to do a genuine redemptive work in the world.

What I started to say, however, was that it is in the realm of the higher goods especially that the individual gets the best chance to become most distinctively an individual by ministering to his fellow men. Here is a thinker who in solitude has seized an idea of intrinsic worth. How shall the thinker most thoroughly master that idea for himself? How can he do better than by trying to make the idea clear to some one else? Our teachers used to

say that no one has really made an idea one's own until one can state that idea to another. The more a thinker tries to make his thought a part of the thought of another, the more his mental creation becomes his own. If he can so state his thought that scores of persons begin to discuss it, the comments of those persons, crude and inadequate as they may seem, throw new lights upon the essential conception itself. As the discussing circle widens, a body of thought comes into existence which is in a manner a social product, and yet which throws the central controlling idea out into ever-increasing significance. In other words society gives to the thinker an audience. We have just begun to estimate aright the power of audiences in shaping a speaker's thought. The initiative, to be sure, is with the man who stands before the audience; but if the audience is at all alert the listening of each quickens the listening of every other, and the collective listening in deeply interested fashion calls forth from the speaker powers whose presence in himself he may not have previously suspected. At the same instant, then, that the individual leader becomes most distinctively himself the audience in turn is most deeply benefited.

We must get away from the notion that emphasis upon the importance of institutional and other social activities means any sort of leveling down,

or leveling up as the case may be. We are indeed wise when we strive for a general raising of the conditions of human welfare in the community, but we must not expect that the raising of the general level will necessarily leave everything relatively where it was before. We should expect to see, on the contrary, increasing profusion and diversity of manifestations. Suppose we had a continent whose soil was stocked with all possible fertilities, but whose atmosphere was at a low temperature. Suppose the mean temperature over the continent to be considerably raised, there would be an astonishing display of new life with such lifting of the temperature, but the changed level would not mean necessarily any increase of uniformity in the life-forms. Individual variations would get their chance. So with anything that lifts the level of physical health in a community, or of general education, or of industrial opportunities. It is through the operation of forces which in their condensed description seem to touch all alike that the individuals as such get a chance to be most distinctively individual. There is nothing in an ideal social organization anyhow which prevents uniformity and separateness from developing hand in hand. In a successful marriage it is doubtless true that as the years go by the husband and wife attain to an increasingly common point of view, and common zeal

in pursuit of ideals; but in that marriage the man becomes, if we may say so, increasingly masculine and the woman increasingly feminine.

A further consideration which calls for increased emphasis on the institutional fields as the sphere of religious activity is our need of the higher moral and spiritual virtues which are generated in coöperation. The pacifists would be justified in applying their principles to some realms outside of the zones of the actual shock in physical battle. The worst consequence of warfare is the development of the warlike mood, a mood which is harmful oftentimes even in such fields as that of intellectual debate. The late Professor Alfred Marshall, a foremost leader in social thinking during the past generation, used to say that the political economist ought always to avoid controversy. Now it might seem that the realm of economics would be especially the field in which much could be gained by controversy, but Marshall was always skeptical of the results of such debate. His instinct was sound, the debater's mood is not the mood of the truth seeker. Not much new truth is discovered by men who gesticulate by pointing with index fingers and by shaking clenched fists. Nor can the finer spiritual truths be communicated through set teeth or in a series of shouts. The church on earth will always have to be militant, because the increasing realiza-

tion of the Christian ideal will progressively reveal the contrast between that ideal and the actual processes of our lives. Still, the militant state is never ideal. If the church is to build a community on earth in which ideal processes rule, there must be place for the coöperative search for the truth, for association in which seekers for the truth lose all traces of partisanship and unitedly strive for increasing knowledge and wisdom. To a degree in the realm of science this ideal has been attained; to a degree also the coöperative work among various forms of social institutions approximates the ideal. It is in these finer, more sympathetic atmospheres that the intellectually and spiritually pioneering soul gets an opening. In a word, any Christian who understands Christianity must concern himself with the social conditions which make possible Christian individuals of the highest saintliness. It is futile to try to develop scientists in lands or times where there is little scientific interest. There is not the slightest possibility that a great mathematician will soon appear among African tribes. It is said that in the old days in Greece the avidity for the study of geometry was so keen that sand tables were set in the public squares and that the citizens assembled around the tables to work out geometrical problems. It is said also that when it was discovered that the angles of a triangle are

together equal to two right angles an ox was slaughtered in honor of the god who was supposed to have prompted the discovery. We may cherish considerable doubt both as to the actual sand tables and as to the actual sacrifice of the ox, but the fact that such legends could get a start at all bears witness to the mathematical interests which made possible Pythagoras and Euclid. So also it was with Greek art. It was only after the general interest in sculpture had reached a certain height that the Venus of Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace became possible. Likewise it is only when the social interest in justice reaches a high level that the finer ethical insights begin to dawn upon the minds of individuals.

A final objection maintains that human character is achieved in the wrestle against obstacles, that all this talk about a finer social atmosphere will, if effective, tend to the same morally enervating results that genial and balmy physical airs have often produced upon the inhabitants of apparently favored tropical lands. We must have a tingle in the air if we are to reach the highest moral achievement. Now a tingle is well enough, but what about damp and fetid atmosphere? There is no expedient by which humanity can so transform earthly conditions as to take out of those conditions the call to the heroic, but society has a right to strive for

such betterment of general conditions as will give individuals at least a hope. To put it in distinctively religious terms, we have a right to seek for the social conditions under which outstanding saintliness in individuals becomes possible. Much of modern life provides for saintliness only as power to resist the grosser temptations. The moral strain with multitudes is that of just an elementary ability day after day to say no. This constant resistance to appeals, almost irresistible in their brutelike might, is indeed a noble spectacle; just as in other ages the day-by-day willingness of laborers to take on their shoulders crushing burdens betokened a certain elementary determination in the human will. Nevertheless industry found ways to lift such burdens off human backs and transfer them to steel arms and hands. Much industrial advance has come through this relief of masses of mankind from too heavy loads. The minds of men got a chance after their backs ceased to ache. The attempt to relieve the strains of those farthest down in the labor scale made possible the general improvement which benefited individuals all the way up. Just as it is a count against many social conditions that they smother out all possibility of intellectual and artistic excellence for hosts of youths, so is it just to charge that many such conditions also make im-

possible the development of that saintliness in individuals which should be the glory of Christianity. We have passed beyond the idea of institutions as ends in themselves to be served by individuals. We are just beginning to see the significance of even the widest phases of social activity for the development of what we may call the intenser and higher individualism.

Chapter VI

JESUS AND VESTED INTERESTS

For a good many years in my experience as a reader of the Gospels I found it difficult to understand the historical causes which brought Jesus to his death. Of course I had been taught the inevitable necessity of the death of Jesus in the divine drama of redemption, but I found it hard to get hold of the actual course of events in the career of Jesus which brought about so terrible a crisis as the crucifixion. I thought of Jesus as chiefly concerned with the utterance of truth as truth. It appeared to me that, on the assumption that Jesus was seeking to redeem the souls of men, his execution by the authorities of his time must have been a grievous mistake, due primarily to the inability of those authorities to comprehend the purposes of Jesus. I once read of a geological investigator who was making surveys in a revolution-ridden section of Mexico to establish an abstruse scientific theory. As this geologist roamed over Mexico with his maps he was captured by the revolutionists and sentenced to death as a spy. All the revolutionists could make of the charts was that they must be proofs of

a hostile military scheme. In something of the same fashion I pictured Jesus as traveling about in Galilee and Judea preaching a truth which the constituted authorities utterly misunderstood. I had been led to believe that in the plan of Jesus the chief consideration was to save individual men without regard to the institutions under which the men might live. The common assumption when I began my ministry over a third of a century ago, was that Jesus strove primarily for the conversion of individuals as such, and that he was content to allow the principles implied in the conversion of individuals to work themselves out in a gradual transformation of society, the change coming so gradually that those affected by it would hardly suspect what was happening.

I always had misgivings concerning this view. Of course no one could doubt the worth of each individual soul in the sight of our Lord, but the reflection kept recurring to me that if Jesus was primarily laboring for the conversion of individuals as individuals he need not have come to a violent death at all. If the people in Galilee and Jerusalem were not willing to listen to him, all he had to do was to pass over into the countries beyond Jewry, anticipating by ten or fifteen years the work of Paul, who when the Jews refused to hear him carried the Gospel to the Gentiles out over the

Roman Empire. The few hints given us of the responsiveness of the Gentiles seem to indicate that a ministry of our Lord outside of the Jewish circle would have met with gratifying welcome from the start. There is nothing in the Gospel narrative to imply that, if Jesus had been willing to follow the plan of preaching the Gospel to individuals as such, he might not have had a ministry of fifty years with no more hardship than we of a later day encounter in so preaching the Gospel.

About a quarter of a century ago the social radicals began to seize upon the career of Jesus as revolutionary. They began to say that Jesus, being a carpenter, sympathized with the lot of the common people, that he was willing to go to any extreme to overthrow the Roman Empire and the existing order of society, for the sake of bringing a better economic chance to the ordinary man. In radical circles to-day we often hear this revolutionary character of early Christianity alleged as historical commonplace. A mild-mannered, scholarly-looking socialist once informed me that there could be no doubt that the early Christians had done just what Nero charged against them, namely, that they had burned Rome, and that the incendiarism more clearly revealed the genius of Christianity than had 1900 years of orthodox preaching. To be sure this is the extreme statement, but it is probable that

thousands upon thousands of radicals think of Jesus as teaching the overthrow of the society of his time. Such radicals speak as if Karl Marx were the legitimate spiritual descendant of Jesus.

It requires only a scant perusal of the Gospels, however, to see that this interpretation is off the track. Jesus seems to have accepted the existing social order as he found it without much attempt at challenging it, except by stating the ideals which no earthly institution had then realized, or has realized since. Jesus accepted as a matter of course the protection of the Roman Empire and lived under that protection. The progress of the early church would not have been possible except through institutions fostered and guarded by Rome. As for labeling Jesus as anti-capitalistic, we must remind ourselves that capitalism, technically speaking, had not arisen in the day of Jesus. There were the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the greedy and the generous. Covetousness was as much in human nature then as now, and the radicals are right when they recognize that nobody has ever warred against covetousness as did Jesus. Nobody has ever pointed out more convincingly the perils of wealth than did Jesus. It is not far amiss to say that Jesus ranked greed for this world's goods as the chief of sins. We can readily see how Saint Francis, in assuming his vows of loyalty to Lady

Poverty, could think he had seized upon the one essential in the commands of Christ. Any man who reads through the Scriptures, and tries in any degree to take off the edge of Jesus's teachings as to covetousness, sins against the soul of the Gospel. Still, I must repeat that the distinctive evils of capitalism which have aroused modern radicals to agitate for a reconstruction of society on a socialistic basis, had not arisen in the day of Jesus; and that, while the authority of Jesus can be claimed for unrelenting war on covetousness, it cannot be urged for any one proposed reconstruction of society, except in that Jesus would approve any plan, no matter what it might be, that would give men a larger chance at ampler and finer human life.

Where the ordinary preaching has failed us, and where the utterances of the social radicals have thrown little light, recent studies of the New Testament have served us. It may seem to some that Professor Benjamin W. Bacon, of Yale, has gone to extremes in detailed critical handling of particular Gospel passages but, speaking for myself, Professor Bacon has brought out into clearest light the fundamental social aims of Jesus. He has made us see the significance in the career of Jesus of his attack on the Temple interests at Jerusalem. Following the clew given us by present-day scien-

tific New Testament study, let us try to put some outlines of the work of Jesus before ourselves.

The preaching of Jesus encountered official opposition from the start. There was early suspicion among the synagogue authorities in Galilee and outright protest as soon as Jesus began to appear at Jerusalem. It is impossible to believe that these official enemies of Jesus so soon aligned themselves against him because they misunderstood him. Teachers and preachers of abstract truth were common enough in the day of Jesus. We seldom hear about them simply because their teachings made little practical difference. Jesus came under fire, not because his enemies misunderstood him, but because they understood him. He early began to call attention to the inadequacies and evils of the institutionalized religion of his time. The Temple was in the control of selfish place-holders and those self-seekers inevitably tended to develop a mechanical orthodoxy and an artificial legalism. Any open-eyed interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, discerns at once that the fault with the priest and Levite who passed by the wounded man was not that they personally were bad, or necessarily weak, but that they were part and parcel of an established religious system which had institutionalized the humanity out of them. Jesus did not care to destroy the Temple or to

overthrow the religious order of his time as such. He did, however, seek to revolutionize the leadership of that system. His driving out the money changers in those fateful hours just before the end was not merely a symbolic gesture. He was striving for a transformation of the religious temper of his nation as that centered in, and reached out from, the Temple. If the people of Jerusalem could have supported Jesus to the extent of insisting upon a change in the control of the Temple, a revolution of far-reaching importance could have been carried through, though such a revolution, strictly limited in its scope, could not justly have been called a revolution in the modern radical sense. It would have belonged in the category of oft-repeated crises by which the leadership of an institution gives way to a different type, in response to irresistible popular pressure. Those in actual mastery of the Temple were determined to resist to the death any such revolution. This is the reason for their endeavor to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the multitude. Anything that would bring Jesus into contempt; or, as we say, get the laugh on him, would loosen his hold on the people. It was the people that the leaders feared. They knew that if all Jerusalem became clamorous for a reformation in the officialdom of the Temple, the priesthood would probably have to yield; for the Roman authorities, unwill-

ing to allow public clamor to approach the dimensions of riot, would insist upon the officials' surrender rather than allow the uproar to reach the stage where serious bloodshed might become inevitable. When the ecclesiastics saw that it was useless to try to shake the hold of Jesus on the multitude by entrapping him in his talk, they plotted to get rid of him in technically legal fashion before the people could realize what was being done. Hence the midnight arrest, the trumped-up charges, and the headlong haste in pressing for an immediate judicial sentence. At this point indeed the narrative becomes remarkably like what occasionally happens in similar circumstances throughout all history. Some familiar acquaintances appear on the scene, notable among them the one-hundred-per-cent patriot. One-hundred-per-cent patriotism is right enough when the right factors are counted in to make the one hundred per cent, but in the events we are considering the patriotic cry was raised by those who had not the slightest patriotism toward the Roman Empire, except as such patriotism might further their own causes.

I have tried to keep the aim of Jesus as I thus interpret it pointed distinctly toward the Temple interests. The priesthood of the day of Jesus had reached the state of mind where they assumed that they owned the Temple. Here was an institu-

tional instrument capable of the vastest religion service, a service which on the whole it had well performed since the date of its establishment. The religious education of the Jewish people is sufficient proof, if proof were needed, of the service which the Temple had rendered the Jews. Institutionalism, however, is always dangerous because of the possibility of the institution's becoming an end in itself, to the neglect of the human and spiritual goods for the development of which the institution is a tool. The rulers at Jerusalem were not only guilty of professionalism, but of a professionalism which was concerned chiefly with their own selfish advantage. Professionalism is bad enough when it loses itself in impersonalism, and seeks to make a mere tool an end on its own account; but professionalism is infinitely worse when it seeks the gain of those wielding the instrument. When any social machine—ecclesiastical or otherwise—gets to running so smoothly that the machine comes to be an end in itself, or when it serves too well the interests of those in charge of it, it may be necessary to scrap the machine. Jesus, however, had apparently no intention of going so far. He sought to compel the wielding of the Temple instrument in a new spirit.

I have said that Jesus was not concerned with general social reform as such. It is now in order

to say that, though he focused his effort directly on the Temple control, he did inevitably strike at other interests with which the Temple was allied. The Temple has been called the "strongest fortress and the richest bank" at the time in Syria. The Temple had woven a network of political and secular connections centering around itself. There were indeed no capitalists in Jerusalem in our modern technical usage, but there were rich men who sought to use the Temple for their own profit, as did the money changers; and there were priests who themselves loved money. There were politicians both in the Temple and outside, trying to manipulate the Jewish religious system for their own political advance. Now, Jesus knew well enough that an attack upon the Temple meant shock to the most powerful forces in Jerusalem. A leading financial and industrial authority in this country has recently been calling upon the pulpit to imitate the "supercautiousness" of the utterances of Jesus. Jesus made some references to devouring widows' houses, to binding man's shoulders with burdens grievous to be borne, and to whited sepulchers full of dead men's bones, all of which cautious phrases strike at practices of the priesthood in relation to "business" interests allied with the Temple. We are not to suppose that Jesus inveighed against the evils of the foremost Jewish establishment of his time with-

out realizing how far his invective might affect other organizations, but his super-caution did not prevent him from speaking out nevertheless. His doing so is a warrant for any prophet's standing out against any institution which blocks the path of the highest welfare of men, especially when that welfare is construed in the finer spiritual terms. We must remember that the attack of Jesus was not conceived in a destructive mood. The aim of our Lord was always at conversion, and not at destruction. All readers of history are aware that beginning with the Protestant Reformation the churches have until recently allowed more and more phases of human activity to pass out from their direct control. This has led to a double fallacy, a fallacy on the part of the upholders of various so-called secular institutional activities which leads such upholders to scream out in horror against any religious criticism of their particular institution, on the ground that such criticism is not the duty of the Church. The Church indeed cannot speak with authority upon the technical aspects of an institution's procedure, but it can legitimately say something about the spirit which animates the procedure. Even where no moral question is immediately involved the Church has a right to point to the spiritual dangers due to the very fact that some

institutions have become so big in our modern life. Professor Carver of Harvard once remarked that while a tiger is biologically only a big cat, the sheer bigness of the tiger requires a different attitude toward him from that ordinarily taken toward a cat. If a tiger got loose in a modern populous center some discerning animal psychologist might point out to us that the tiger's activities were at bottom manifestations of a kittenish playfulness, but I doubt whether we should feel especially reassured. We live in the midst of institutions many of which have long since passed into the tiger size. Many huge political, industrial, racial, national, international organizations nowadays have developed such long and sharp claws that what they themselves think of as a good may practically be a terror to a society anxious for the finest and best for men. I don't believe that I should like to be petted even by a friendly tiger. As long as the ideals of Jesus for men are the goal of the Church of Christ, just so long that Church will have to war against any institutional activity which hinders the realization of those ideals.

A second fallacy is that there is no actual connection between modern institutions and the Church. The churches that have the least to say about the dangers of social institutions to the king-

dom of God are too often the ones which are themselves in dubious moral relation to some of the secular forces. There is no possibility of completely cutting connection between the Church and other social creations. The relationship ought to be one of mutual helpfulness. If the prophet of God seeks rightly to influence the institutions of his time he will in the end touch the lives of individuals more powerfully for good than by giving his ministry exclusively to the seeking out of individuals one at a time. If, on the other hand, the high-minded institutionalist wishes to make his institution count for the most for humanity, he will welcome, or at least put up with, any prophetic utterance which seeks to hold the institution to the right ideals.

On the whole it will always require strenuous prophetic utterance to do much good. In spite of the duty of taking long views, the institutionalists are proverbially prone to short views. I can well imagine that a prophetically minded Nicodemus, for example, might have warned Caiaphas that a temper such as the authorities were manifesting against Jesus would wreck the Jewish nation within forty years. I do not know what Caiaphas would have said in reply, but I feel confident that he would have considered forty years time enough for

his own purposes, and would have assured himself that those who were to come after him might deal with the situation forty years in the future. The forty years, however, expired about A. D. 70, and the situation which had developed by that time was just a little beyond the possibility of successful handling by any leaders of the Jewish nation.

Chapter VII

MYSTICISM AND ITS HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

I wish in this chapter to consider mysticism not from the point of view of the psychological expert, but from that of one trying to estimate its worth for the distinctively human values. We surely can consider this significance without detailed knowledge of the psychological states which are called mystic. I am concerned chiefly with the tendency of some teachers of mysticism to speak as if the mystic vision were an end in itself above all other ends, and with that of some other mystics to speak of the Christian ideal as the absorption of the human in the divine. I do not even undertake a definition of mysticism. I trust that by my treatment, however, the main characterizations which may fairly be called descriptive will become reasonably clear.

If mysticism is to be Christian we must judge it by the Christian view of man and of God. The spiritual experiences which are called mystic have been common enough in all religions. We have in these addresses remarked with wearisome frequency

that Christendom is not any more religious than non-Christendom—that heathenism takes its religions quite as seriously as the followers of Christ take Christianity. Mystic states seem to be common enough in all systems of religion. The phases of experience which we think of as most distinctively Christian such as conversion, the focusing of the religious will in acute crises, the instants of rapt vision—all these are to be found in practically every form of religion. One task before Christianity is the redemption of religion itself. The human mind, wherever it is, passes through successions of definite organic changes and these changes have their relations to religious emotion. One task of Christianity in dealing with any of the phases of religious experience which could be called mystic, is the Christianization of the experiences themselves, by which we mean bringing them into conformity to the Christ thought of man and the Christ thought of God.

One school of mysticism tells us that the aim of religious endeavor should be the absorption of the finite person in the infinite. In its extreme development this idea seems to come from somewhat Indian origins. Dwellers in Oriental lands are so likely to be impressed with the tragedy of the universe that they think the highest good would be escape from every thing finite. In such lands the

goal of religious experience often takes the path of a search for unconsciousness, a sinking into nothingness. Such a conception is on the face of it out of harmony with Christianity, for Christianity seeks the quickening of consciousness rather than a sinking into unconsciousness. Now when we consider this doctrine of absorption in the infinite as the goal of true Christian striving, we find ourselves somewhat at a loss to know just what absorption means. The doctrine cannot be genuinely Christian if it means, for example, that the individual soul ceases to be. With our emphasis on persons as in any degree active agents, we can see that it is not possible for one agent to absorb another. The only absorption of the finite self by the infinite would be the obliteration of the finite altogether, with the infinite somehow continuing the experiences of the finite in its own infinite life, or the exaltation of the finite up to the height where its experiences run parallel to those of the infinite. On the first supposition we are out of line with that principle of Christianity which holds us to the sacredness of the human self on its own account, and on the second supposition we likewise sin against the worth of the human self, unless we provide that in this expansion of the finite toward the infinite the marks of the distinctively human person still persist. It would be a vast help if some

of the modern preachers of the absorption of the finite in the infinite would labor more earnestly to tell us what they mean. One thinker will have it that we are always to be "moments" in the divine consciousness. What does that mean? In ordinary speech the moment almost flashes by, an instant which comes and goes. Is the infinite to remember eternally the moment which I am, or am I as a "moment" to have any consciousness of my existence? Take another poetic expression which tells us that we are to be each of us a pulse in the infinite life. Now we all know that we must not expect too much of figures of speech, but what does "pulse" mean in this context? In the human organism it is merely a passing rhythmic movement which comes and goes, unique only in that perhaps it can never be exactly repeated. In a word all the phases of mysticism which rise out of pantheistic tendencies have to meet the general objections to pantheism as sinning against the worth of the human personality.

Another somewhat current teaching tells us that the mystic vision is the supreme good on its own account, that we are to seek to see God, and that without regard to the question as to the effect of the vision upon us. The vision is there on its own account. We gaze upon it just as we gaze upon truth or beauty in any manifestation for the worth of the vision in itself.

This sounds final when declared by some of the masters of mystic exposition, but in the most absorbed gaze of the mystic vision there is always the implied reference to the gazer. As we ponder the accounts by mystics of their own visions we find that they make much of the raptures or ecstasy into which the vision transports them. The breathing becomes short or seems to be suspended altogether. The soul seems to be lifted out of the body and carried above the earth. There is an excess of delightful climaxes almost turning into the painful. One of the most discerning students of mysticism has remarked that he cannot read some passages in Dante descriptive of the divine glories without feeling a physical thrill. When the mysticism is based on the contemplation of the glories of nature as was Wordsworth's, one mark of the genuineness of the experience seems to be its power of causing an unutterable ecstatic joy. So that we cannot resist the conclusion that when the advocates of mysticism tell us that we are to contemplate the mystic vision on its own account, they after all mean that if we will thus seek the vision happy results in ourselves will follow, though of course they do not urge us to seek emotional joys directly. They are indeed objective enough in pointing to the vision itself, but one cannot help surmising that if the vision were not accompanied by emotional quicken-

ing, the seer might fancy that he had not truly beheld the vision.

Since emotional effects of mystic visions are admitted, we have a right to ask what other effects there may be. Or we may inquire as to the after effects of the experience. Do the visions tend toward disintegration or integration of the personal life, to use the psychologists' technicalities? Do the visions seem to give the mind worthy content for reflection? Is the will strengthened or relaxed? Is the mystic any sounder in his general physical and mental health after mystic uplifts? Is he more or less self-centered in his religious effort? What place do his fellows take in his life after his experience? In a word, is he a larger and finer human being because of the mystic vision?

I think it is possible so to approach this theme of mysticism as to keep the emphasis Christian, and to enlarge the human vigor and refine the human qualities. What is mysticism but a form of knowledge? Christian mysticism must then be a path to Christian knowledge, and Christian knowledge finds its final proof in the life of the Christian. Suppose we look at some Christian paths to knowledge and see how they may lead—indeed often do lead—to that quickness of discernment which is the heart of mystic experience.

Jesus told his disciples that he who doeth the will

of God cometh to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus was not the first to discover this principle of knowing by doing. The Old Testament abounds in the idea of obedience to the moral will of God as the road to knowledge. Jesus, however, put the stamp of his own originality upon the principle and made it central in Christian discipleship. By Christian doing we ordinarily mean deeds performed by the energy of will. A person by choice puts forth his own powers in conformity with the Christian ideal, let us say. Let us assume that at the beginning of the life of discipleship the deeds of obedience are simple, and the Way of Christ is plain. As the life moves forward, problems of more complexity seem for the moment to block the path. The solution, understand, must be moral if it is to be Christian. The disciple, it may be, marshals reasons for and against taking the right hand or the left. There are moments when the solution seems utterly beyond reach, but the disciple decides, and finds that his decision has brought him light and peace. After months or years of such traveling in the Way, the disciple develops a sense for the right path and chooses that path without stopping to give formal reasons—or possibly without being able to give such reasons. He has attained to the ability to see at once the line through a tangled perplexity to the just answer. In doing

this he has become a person of wider and keener sight. The finest tribute we can pay to him is to say that he can thus see his way through. It may be that he does not have visions which we customarily think of as mystic, but the all-important characteristic of his life is that he can see. The seeing has come out of the deliberate adjustments of his total life to what he has conceived of as the Christian duties.

This is in a higher realm what we often see abundantly illustrated in a lower. To take instances that first come to mind, we may think of the acute perceptions of woodsmen or sailors. Through long living in the woods or on the sea a man may develop an awareness for subtle meanings utterly impossible to the untrained. It is said that the faculties of Henry David Thoreau became so fine in their power to detect interferences with the ordinary courses of nature, that he could pass along a path on the darkest night in total silence, and detect the nearness of a human being or a human habitation by an awareness of a disturbing element in the ordinary natural forces. A picturesque touch in the book of Acts tells us that at a moment in Paul's shipwreck experience the sailors sensed that they were drawing near to land, and that when the leads were cast the soundings revealed that the surmise of the sailors was correct.

The actual putting forth of the energies of the will in dealing with earth and air and sea begets and fosters a power to see with a range of vision which appears utterly miraculous to the mind not trained. This does not necessarily mean that any one faculty becomes especially acute. It does mean that all the faculties have organized themselves for a special purpose. We pay tribute to such skill because we think of these experts as fine developments of humanity. We envy them their power to enter into so close communion with the natural forces in the midst of which we live.

I call attention to this acuteness as the response of the whole life to a situation, because by analogy it helps guard against the frequently urged doctrine that Christian mysticism calls for the development of some unusual faculty. Some phrasings of mysticism seem to imply that only those who have specialized organs for seeing God can ever behold him. We shall have occasion enough to remember that the mystic seer may develop a power to extraordinary degree, but there is no warrant for supposing that those who attain the finest and best understanding of the Divine are endowed with organs for the seizure of the Divine which their fellows lack. Special sensitiveness may be developed for the apprehension of Christian truth, but this does not imply peculiar organs which the common

man lacks. The Christian understanding is an earned understanding. It is a prize to be won. No matter how much more highly one man may be endowed than another in religious capability, the Christian method of learning is through the deliberate putting forth of moral energy. We are well aware that we have in religious understanding differences in endowment similar to those in other spheres of knowledge. One who trains himself to a specific religious ability comes at last to possess what is virtually a genius in that direction. This, however, is quite other than saying that we must depend for our religious knowledge upon the reports of men with organs which their fellows do not possess. Even emphasis upon unusual spiritual ability is questionable as leading to one-sidedness, unless the power is built upon a broad basis of general religious activity. The world will not be content to take its spiritual guidance from specialists whose specialism consists just in an extreme sensitiveness of a single faculty. To a degree all Christians are specialists, each being more morally or spiritually proficient at some religious task than at others. There must, however, in any genuine Christian life be a central purpose ruling the will. Here is a realm where we cannot sanction an attitude similar to that often assumed toward artists for example, namely, that if the artist gratifies our

æsthetic taste by his particular genius we tacitly agree to say nothing concerning his conduct in any other spheres whatever. In considering Christian revelations we care nothing for a particular detail of professed revelation if essential Christian motives do not guide the life of the revealer. We often remark that truth is truth no matter who utters it, but we make the remark with some reservations when we come to fundamental religious conceptions. For in the spiritual life we regard revelation as in the nature of discovery, and we believe that the finer shades of insight come only to him whose will is ruled by a spirit of obedience. An explorer might make to us statements as to conditions at the North Pole. He might accidentally tell us the truth as to those conditions. If, however, he himself had not been at the North Pole, we should not be much impressed by his reminding us that truth is truth no matter who utters it. If the explorer had not made a journey to the North Pole his utterance at best would be more or less a lucky guess. Our resentment at insincerity in religious utterance is so instinctive that it is difficult to analyze it, but the resentment must be in a measure due to our feeling that the insincere speech is a laying claim to truth which is not its by any right of discovery.

In thus laying stress upon the primacy of the will

in Christian vision I do not mean by will activities necessarily those having to do with more material daily concerns. If we are not careful we can make here the same mistake that some commit when they pronounce physical labor the source of all values in the industry world, though this error is not as common now as formerly. We have come to see that labor may be most earnest and strenuous without the actual exercise of a muscle. So in the realm of "pure" intellect we may find sternest discipline under the control of will. We often hear it said that when light breaks upon a student it flashes so quickly that it seems hardly related to any straining attention of the will, but we know that it is the exercise of sustained attention which brings the illumination at last. When I was a freshman in college I wrestled one night on a mathematical problem from eight o'clock till midnight and then abandoned all hope of reaching a solution. The next morning as I walked down the street toward the class, gazing upon the green of the trees and listening to the singing of the birds, the sought-for answer leaped into my mind. I thought to myself that possibly the illumination had come because of some peculiar gift, not hitherto suspected in myself, for mathematical reasoning. I looked upon the struggle of the preceding night as wasted, because nothing resembling a solution had occurred to me

in all my stiffer thinking. The next time a problem was set before me I did not give myself to such earnest endeavor, but waited for the light to flash of itself—and no light flashed. It is only fair to say that I was not long in discovering that the apparently instantaneous gleam of insight was the outcome of the intense study. So likewise it must be with religious insight. There are no doubt immense differences in the abilities of individuals to master religious conceptions, but even with those who seem almost to leap from one conception on to the next higher, it must be that the quick alertness comes out of the willed attention to the Christian ideal. For still further illustration we may consider how artistic appreciation often likewise dawns upon us in sudden instants. It may be that there are persons who do not at the outset enjoy the finer masterpieces of music but who, after prolonged study of music, on some unforgettable day find themselves suddenly enthralled by a strange beauty. So also one can stand before a lordly creation of sculpture, and after long contemplative brooding suddenly behold it almost start into life. I remember once stopping before the Shaw monument, by St. Gaudens, on Boston Common. I was struck at first chiefly by the skill of the artist in working out the details of the equipment of the marching troops. After a little the figures of the group merged into

a unity, and I fancied I caught the scene and its meaning as St. Gaudens intended. Suddenly I forgot that I was on a Boston street and that passersby were moving to and fro. The bronze soldiers seemed to break into an actual march. I was carried back to the Civil War, and gazed upon a heroic idealist, fusing something of his idealism into the figures marching at his horse's side. I had stepped above the street into the realm of the timeless. If the theme had been definitely religious, I suppose I could have testified that I had passed through a mystic experience, but I am using the incident simply for purposes of illustration. My point is that the quasi-mystic illumination came as the outcome of my deliberately directing my attention to the mastery of the meaning of the statue, until around that fixed purpose everything else for the moment marshaled itself, and halted the passage of the moments.

The exercises to which the mystics in other days used to give themselves aimed at this purposeful control of attention. Insofar as the exercises came from no genuine moral purpose they led to little, but if they arose out of earnest desire to understand the God of Christianity, they were of importance as leading to the swift insights which did much to enforce and renew sound Christian knowledge. It is easy and cheap to ridicule all mysticism

as thrill-hunting. Such a charge, however, would have slight weight against a seeker for solutions to mathematical questions, and yet the delight at watching the elements of a mathematical problem falling into their proper places and pointing toward a central meaning may be surpassingly intense. What I am trying to insist upon is that the states of consciousness which we call mystical in religion do not stand apart in a class by themselves, that both the suddenness and the joy accompanying such states can be paralleled in the more strictly intellectual and æsthetic realms, and that the insights attained in all the realms alike result from the direction of the will toward desired objects, and that the vision, when it comes, leaves the seer more of a thinker, or more of an artist, or more of a saint, and more of a man, than before.

In an earlier chapter I referred to *The Art of Thought* by Graham Wallas, and paid tribute to the suggestiveness of Wallas's treatment of a period of incubation as necessary for sound conclusions in thinking. It is easy to take Mr. Wallas's conception and make it seem to be at variance with the purposed effort which I am urging as the path to Christian knowledge. This, however, would be complete misunderstanding. Mr. Wallas never intended that all we have to do in thinking is to cast seed thoughts into our mind, and allow these seeds

to spring and grow up and ripen to fruitage on their own account. There are indeed some teachers who call for naturalness in Christian learning,—by which they seem to mean simply allowing conceptions to come of themselves without effort of will by the learner. Such teachers forget the suggestive hint in the fact that the largest sum of human effort spent year by year is to make use of and coöperate with natural processes. Some scientist has told us that more human energy is annually put forth to turn over the soil of the earth by the plow than is devoted to any other one physical purpose whatsoever. Civilization begins with the attempt to control natural processes. We are told in the New Testament that the Kingdom of Heaven is as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and should rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, the man knoweth not how; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. I have heard this passage interpreted as if in the Kingdom of Heaven we are to let growing seeds take care of themselves, which may be sound enough, but we cannot let fields as such take care of themselves. Fields, in the Master's own parables, are thought of as fenced, as deep-stirred by processes that make for enrichment of the subsoil, as kept free of weeds. Moreover the husbandman, while he does not know how the earth produces

fruit, nevertheless keeps a close eye on the changes through which the growing grain passes. He does not deal with blade as if it were ear, or with ear as if it were full corn. Though the growth of the grain is due to the forces of nature, yet the farmer's labor counts in every stage of the plant's transformation.

Religious insights, even though they have all the marks of Divine gifts, come out of our control of natural and human processes. We may well be grateful for our modern scientific study of psychology—mistaken and even absurd as some of that psychology may seem—for it all is akin to the scientific observation of earthly soils for the production of food for mankind. The agriculturalist painstakingly notes the stages through which seeds and soils pass. He seeks to modify soils for increased productivity. Likewise modern religious education strives to make a better religious soil into which the seed of the truth is to be cast. In face of all the changes for the better which have been made in earth's soils by planned effort, we shall not be deterred from like attempts in dealing with the soils of human lives by any claim that we are forcing lives, or diverting them from the natural. We have come to recognize that in some of the most natural bodily processes we are in need of scientific correction. For example, a runner is taught to

develop a gait which appears unnatural, because with that gait he can run faster and farther. A swimmer is taught a stroke which likewise appears artificial, because the stroke is the best for covering the distances and for conserving the strength of the swimmer. We desire the utmost knowledge of God available for men. The truest way to reach that knowledge is deliberately to plan to bring the natural life into harmony with the ideals of the Christ who reveals to us the moral God.

It may be objected that thus far I have laid stress upon the revelations which come to men out of obedience to the Divine Will, and that I have made no provision for those illuminations which have come as a result of what might be called disobedience to the Divine Will. In other words, I have been assuming all along that spiritual normality and general moral soundness in men have been the channels through which the Divine Spirit works, forgetting instances like that of Saul of Tarsus who, according to this objection, could not have been said to have desired or earned the vision on the Damascus road. I have, according to some, laid disproportionate stress on the utilization of the natural processes of life as channels for the revelation of the Divine, neglecting what we have always taught as divine interruption of natural processes by a spiritual violence in converting or transform-

ing the soul. Paul himself spoke of his own experience as that of one violently born into his career too early, out of due time.

I must protest against any interpretation of the classic conversion, namely that of Saul, as a violent wresting of a sinner from a wicked life. Saul is a supreme instance of deliberate purpose in religious activity. Judged by the religious standards by which he was reared he was not a sinner at all, but the most righteous of men. He had been nurtured in a strict Jewish home, and had been instructed by a foremost Jewish rabbi. The difference between him and other Jews seems to have been that he took the Law much more seriously than they did, and that he could not make the adjustments through compromise which would enable him to be at peace with any slightest requirement of the law not fulfilled. Paul deliberately marked out for himself a straight path, and would not turn aside a hair's breadth to the right or to the left. Knowing what we do of his life after conversion, of how thoroughly he dominated men and circumstances, we are prepared to see in his earlier career a marvelous exhibition of self-domination with moral purpose. He drove himself ahead, because of his devotion to what appeared to him the highest religious duty. We cannot picture him as consenting to the death of Stephen with a cool or callous heart. The scene

must have sunk deep into his memory, and other memories of kindred vividness—memories of the patience of Christians cast into prison—must have torn his inmost soul. He was indeed riding rough-shod over all who stood in his way, but riding not with the roughness of indifferent Roman soldiers to whom such cruelty was but an incident of the day's work. Paul had found no joy in his attempt to carry out the law to the utmost. No small portion of the distress which the Law caused him must have been due to the agony of his spirit in inflicting pain upon Christians because he had to fight the new sect to keep peace with his conscience.

After a time the accumulation of bitter distresses proved too enormous for this regal will. By his own resolution he kept damming the stream of his thought back until it would be withstood no longer. I would not detract by the slightest accent from the divineness of the conversion of Saul. I believe there was a revelation of the Living Christ to Saul on the Damascus road, but I am confident that that revelation broke upon a mind which had gone through natural steps intelligible to us. The consciousness of frustration or of defeat in following a religious duty through to its last conclusion is common enough in men's histories. If the will at a moment of frustration sinks down in defeat the life may be wrecked, but if it on the other hand

obediently adjusts itself to the new revelation that revelation gets its full chance. How significant that Paul thought of the vision as something to be obeyed! He could claim for himself in the after days that he had not been disobedient to the heavenly vision. His conversion had not been unnatural. He had been living a natural life in that he had been holding himself up to the highest and best ideals within the sweep of his soul. His career was altogether logical. His trouble had arisen through following logic out to the last degree. He cannot be classified among those who are converted from sin as we ordinarily define sin.

It will be urged however that indubitable visions of the Divine have come to repentant sinners. I should have to deny the entire course of the history of Christianity if I denied this, but I still insist that the only channel for an adequate revelation of the Divine to Christian vision is a life held by moral will to the Christian ideal. The deepest penitence is of those who have sinned heedlessly, or who have yielded to fleshly appetites without fully realizing what they were doing. There is a world of difference between sins like this and sin as a deliberate flouting of ideals recognized as good. It would be hazardous to preach that any large vision of God is possible after purposed rejection of an ideal recognized as good. That there is forgiveness for such

transgression Christianity freely proclaims, but any Christianity that understands itself sees in intended rejection of the truth such havoc for the size and quality of the rejecting soul that such a soul becomes thereafter of doubtful value as an instrument of spiritual sight. Seared consciences can no doubt be restored, but how can they ever be what they would have been if they had not been seared? Here we come upon one of the deepest paradoxes in Christian teaching, namely, that the man who has himself sinned least is most distressed over sin, for the man who has sinned through deliberate choice has by that choice so benumbed his own spiritual faculties that acute distress is almost impossible. However we may interpret mysticism, the cardinal need of mankind is the vision of God. The vision of God will be stronger and finer as the men who receive the vision become stronger and finer. I have already remarked that it is the high privilege of men to regard themselves as instruments for the revelation of the truth. If a man, then, is to look upon his life as an instrumental lens, let us say, through which other men are to see God, the finer the lens the more definite and more powerful the vision. It is significant that the lens-makers so often refer to this or that glass as "powerful." The increase of the power of the instrument increases the force of the revelation made through it.

In the last chapter of this book I shall seek to draw together the threads which make it seem reasonable to interpret God in terms of the highest and best we can think of men. Without anticipating too much of the later discussion may I say that we do not reach the highest in our vision of God, from the point of view of Christianity I mean, until we think of God as realizing to the full the qualities which we hold as best in men, and until these qualities form at least an element in our vision. That was more than a poetic touch in that description in the Book of Daniel according to which, after the seer had beheld in his vision empires symbolized by the figures of beasts he at last beheld a figure like unto a son of man. No vision of God can be fully Christian until it at least approximates the human qualities. There are indeed mystic visions like those of such transcendent poets as Wordsworth. Many of these visions are altogether religious, but they may not be fully Christian. Wordsworth's feeling of the Presence deeply interfused with nature might have been shared by a noble-spirited Greek long before Christianity was born. I do not intend by this the slightest reflection upon the Wordsworth experience.

We must not forget, though, that there are all varieties of mysticism taught among us to-day, some of the varieties at bottom heathen. Hindu

mysticism, to take an example, admittedly does not tend notably to the enlargement of human life. For such enlargement everything depends upon the object of contemplation, and especially upon the higher spiritual and moral qualities of that object. I yield to none in my regard for the Christ-like spirit which Mr. Gandhi shows in his life, a spirit which puts so many of us professed Christians to shame. Nevertheless I do not like to have the admirers of Gandhi get too excited when I say that I do not care to follow him into mystic contemplation till I know a little more clearly what I am to contemplate. I repeat that I have read from Mr. Gandhi's own pen that he yields to none in his reverence for the sacred cow. At once I am told that this is nothing but the Indian statement of the doctrine of divine immanence, though it seems to me only a statement of the divine immanence in cows. I next hear that "cow" is merely symbolic, which seems to make it mean something quite other than cow. What does it mean? Now it is not true to Christianity to teach a mysticism which does not take the highest and best in our spiritual reach as the clew to the central qualities of the universe. In Christian inspiration the inspired soul is exalted to its noblest powers through the contemplation of the Christ-character as the key to the moral universe. The cultivation of mystic states which do not leave

the mystic more of a man in his moral interests after cultivation than before seems to be of doubtful value.

It seems a fair conclusion that the Christian vision of God must be, when all is said, a vision of Christ. If we are to turn our search away from an experience which is predominantly emotional, and put the content of the experience into the center of our gaze, it follows almost without saying that to seek for true mysticism is to seek for the mind and spirit of Christ, attainable only by obedience to Christ's rules for discipleship. Instead then of becoming so reactionary in our pursuit of the mystic vision as to take miracle, if not magic, as the goal, we must follow Christ's rules for learning the truth, especially those which center in the will to obey God. Even the apparently casual remarks scattered throughout the Gospel as to discipleship have significance here. For example Jesus said that as men take the yoke upon themselves they become his disciples, as if there was something in voluntary harnessing oneself to a task which leads to enlightenment. Again Jesus spoke of persecution as the path to the understanding of the prophets, as if standing against evil so firmly as to bring down upon one's head the wrath of the mob would open one's eyes to prophetic insights and prophetic values. The Book of Acts embodies

what must have been a sound tradition in the early church when it tells us that the dying Stephen beheld the risen Christ in mystic vision. In a word it is by working together with Christ that we can see the world as Christ saw it. It is possible to maintain that the mystic vision begins with those practical doings which we call will activities, and comes back at the end to the practical again.

We often hear it preached that a legitimate aim of mystic vision is to behold nature transfused with the divine glow as Wordsworth saw nature. We can well believe that as one partakes of such vision he is entering into a view of the world in degree like unto God's. If this is true, can it not also be that a man can enter into a divine vision as he looks out upon the world of men? It is said of Phillips Brooks that in the winter months his vesper services would close in approaching darkness, because he did not care to have the lights turned on while he was speaking. The great preacher used to look out over the audience, as the shadows began to deepen, and as he thus looked the distinctive features of individuals became blurred indeed but the audience seemed to take on for him an expression as if the common needs of humanity were showing through each countenance. Now if we believe that we enter into communion with God in the mystic vision of nature because we see God's thought and

feeling wrought out before us, by as much as human nature is higher than divine nature can we not see God more surely in human life? Would not the power to idealize the faces of men be a path to the understanding of God himself, and would not such idealization be a revelation also of the higher nature possible to the men themselves? In the mystic vision of nature we may indeed feel a delight beyond all words, and the delight may ennoble our souls, but we cannot do much to bring the actual day-by-day course of nature up to the glory of our visions. In dealing with men on the other hand, it ought to be possible to make our vision itself count in transforming the lives of men themselves into the larger and finer. If we could see men as Christ saw them we could probably lift them more nearly to the Christ ideal simply by hailing and greeting the nature which we see in them. Paul gloried in his mystic visions but the visions upon which he constantly acted were those of the idealized characters of his churches.

Even if we turn to the most matter-of-fact aspects of human nature and see men in their weakness and pain and sin, we may well believe that we come into communion with God through redemptive gaze upon these phases of human nature which we call realistic, not to say seamy. The closest understanding between persons comes in coöpera-

tion. It may be that the noblest visions of the God of Christ will come to us as we fasten our gaze upon the human objects of the divine thought.

To sum up, any true vision of God, mystic or otherwise, must be learned in the human way, and the more worthy we make the human the more worthy the idea of God which that human can seize. There is every reason why the Church should give itself to the profoundest possible study of human nature, welcoming every attempt in every quarter to bring out into the light the workings of the human mind, that through these workings men may attain to the deeper knowledge of the Divine. A suggestive writer once said that the greater vessels of God's truth are anchored just off shore, because there are not yet harbors deep enough to receive them. If this illustration seems to be too material, we may say that the fuller possibilities of the divine life lie just beyond our reach because we have not yet developed spiritual organisms strong enough and fine enough to seize the sheer vitality of the divine and to give it adequate expression.

We must not forget that if we are to have a genuinely moral kingdom of God we must have a path to the knowledge of God in which all can walk. Jesus made the test for entrance into his kingdom a willingness to do the will of God. This brings the test down within reach of every human

will. We must, then, expect that the Kingdom shall be so ordered that any man can go the full length in obedience, receiving all the truth of which he is capable. This includes such knitting of member to member in a social organism that the social forces themselves become instruments for the revelation of the divine truth. The vision of God has usually been expounded as if it meant the vision of the individual but, as we have said in a previous chapter, a social spirit can so quicken the vision of individuals that they can together attain to vision which no individual could grasp by himself. The path to the vision of God is individual and social obedience which will develop better individuals, and will create the social conditions out of which the members of the Body of Christ can know Christ as their head.

Chapter VIII

HUMAN NATURE AND DIVINE

Very often in these latter days the Christian minister finds a friendliness to the Church in quarters where he did not expect such a temper. He wonders what has caused some whom he has regarded as agnostic or sceptic to accept the Christian view of man and of God. Upon inquiry, however, he may discover that there has been no acceptance of the Christian view of the universe and of God at all. The friendliness is toward an institution which, in ideal at least, exalts human values; and the avowed desire is to accept those values on their own account and to seek to further them for their own worth. I have known atheists to declare that while they have rejected the idea of God outright, they still hold fast to Christianity for its teaching as to the value of man. I have known theological students who have refused to call themselves theists, to seek entrance to the Christian ministry as a field for the service of their fellow men. It is true that in most such instances the denial of theism is a protest against theology rather than against a fundamental belief in God which

cannot be stated in speech, but the denial is significant nevertheless. Some professed and professional teachers of religious philosophy tell us that theism is outworn, and that genuine emancipation comes as we cease thinking about God and give ourselves wholly to the service of men. We have the human values,—why should we trouble ourselves about abstract questions which show an inevitable tendency toward metaphysical aridity and practical sterility? Probably no question is to-day being asked of religious teachers with more insistence than this.

A generation ago it might have been possible to dispose of such questions with a flourish of the hand and the oracular pronouncement that such a spirit comes out of some hidden evil in the soul, but not so to-day. For some who speak thus are among the most devoted servants of men now living. It is manifestly possible for individuals to live in the spirit of self-sacrificing service with little or no theology or philosophy of the universe. Still the inquiry is pertinent as to whether what is possible to some could safely be made a rule for all. The force of Balfour's remark in the *Foundations of Belief* has not diminished in the past thirty years since the book was published, namely, that faith is like confidence in the banks in a commercial community. It is possible for an individual depositor

to withdraw all he has put in the banks provided the general confidence of the community in the banks stays firm. Individual doubt is made permissible by social faith. The ultimate question here is as to the social consequences of a doubt which becomes socially widespread. Does not the refusal to ask of the human values as to whither they lead in their suggestiveness and implications mean at last a lack of loyalty to those values themselves? Are not the values intertwined with constructions we put upon the universe as a whole? Will not the refusal to put large constructions upon the universe lead in the end to failure to put large views on the value of men? Can we hold fast to the enlargement of man in a universe rapidly shrinking in moral values? Can we make man worthwhile in a worthless universe? A distinguished philosopher who disavows all pragmatist leanings gives himself to what he claims to be the welfare of men on a "firm basis of unyielding despair" so far as the universe is concerned. It may be permissible to remark in passing that when a thinker announces this belief in a firm base of unyielding despair he is introducing subjective human elements into his thinking quite as truly as are the pragmatists. Any man who proclaims a base of unyielding despair is bound to have it so. The will not to believe is quite as subjectively humanistic as

the will to believe. Of course all this will be rejected by such thinkers as "fine-spun." Let it be so rejected then, for the sake of the argument, and let us try to build men into a good life on the basis of despair.

Let us assume the universe, then, to be a catastrophe. It is on fire, or shipwrecked, or wandering about lost. Service consists in rescuing men from the cosmic flames, or floods, or in getting them into right paths in a system hopelessly lost. What would service of men in such a world result in, except possibly in getting them to defy the universe? The good-in-itself would be the soul who defies the universe. This recognition would have to be the result of some direct insight into values, and the possession of such insight raises quite a philosophical puzzle. The mind that can discover the worthlessness of the universe has made a considerable discovery and is a problem on its own account. Just how complacency and any human contentment can be built on unyielding despair is another mystery. In fact all the ordinary meanings which we have put into the judgment of human value would have to go. We should come at last to a pity for men which would have nothing in the universe to sustain it, or to give it power. Of course it is possible to say that we take the human values for just what they are, final in themselves

like consummate works of beauty, but human values include within themselves the idea of a progress which would have no support in a universe of despair. Even if we take them as we take flashes of beauty good on their own account, the question keeps arising as to how these beauties happen in a world of despair. All we can say is that out of despair comes something better than despair, and then swarms of perplexities are upon us.

We may remind ourselves that determined attempt has been made in the course of the world's thinking to put human values as the center of worship without regard to anything beyond themselves, and to the exclusion of everything smacking of philosophy. After Auguste Comte had worked his way through theology and metaphysics to positivism he announced humanity as such to be the proper object of worship. He thought of humanity as to be taken on its own account without regard to any relation to the universe except that of the mastery of scientific laws. The scheme of worship as he at last elaborated it was one of the oddest creations of the human intellect. Huxley characterized its elaborate symbolisms as Roman Catholicism with Christianity left out. Now it is not possible to put the human values at the center of a worshipful gaze without taking account of those values as suggesting something beyond themselves.

Even in the presence of perfection in art we cannot keep down the question as to how such perfection of beauty came to be. In raising questions as to its source we have moved beyond the beauty as something in itself. Its finality itself prompts question.

Suppose we take some simple tests which all thinking must sooner or later meet, and ask ourselves how some of the humanistic systems behave in the face of these tests—"humanistic" meaning, just now, the systems which rather aim at keeping at the center of regard the human itself without thinking beyond the human. The first assumption is that we must have a community of persons. We assume ourselves. No man lives to himself alone or thinks to himself alone. If he assumes only his own existence he must be careful not to fall into the absurdity of trying to prove his existence to others whose existence he denies. Next, we must assume that, in general, human reasoning is trustworthy, or we face the absurdity of trying to prove reason untrustworthy by reason itself. Thirdly, we must assume some common-to-all in our experience which makes the communication of thought possible. Of course each of us looks at the world through different eyes, but if there is nothing common in our experiences even speech is unintelligible. All of this is assumption, but without

such assumption our thinking cannot have either beginning or middle or end. We have no desire to try to define exactly what the selves are, or what the laws of reason are, or what the common-to-all is. All we care to say is that all systems have to take account of these assumptions and that the assumptions make the human values point beyond themselves.

We begin with pragmatism. Of course it is hard to define pragmatism, for if the test of truth is in consequences we have all sorts of consequences to deal with. I do not think that it is unjust to say that in the main the consequences toward which pragmatism has been tending during thirty years of its course have been practical, with little to distinguish between pragmatism and a preponderantly material utilitarianism. James and Dewey, who did as much as any thinkers in this country to inaugurate pragmatism, have been most outspoken in protest against practical success as a standard of intellectual and spiritual judgments, but the characterization of the pragmatic system as open to all the shortcomings of utilitarianism is, I think, just. A distinguished exponent of pragmatism was once asked in my hearing as to the usefulness of the higher mathematical equations in the most severe astronomical research. His reply was that the equations are useful to the astronomer

himself, and on further inquiry at least seemed to hold that the intellectual delight of the mathematician in the solution of problems is among the practical consequences which pragmatism recognizes. All of which is outright surrender—as agreeing that the mind has insights of its own to be gratified, these insights being of an order which can be called practical only by emptying the word "practical" of its ordinary meaning, while it is the ordinary sense of "practical" which has popularized the theory.

Some of those who largely sympathize with pragmatism have seen the tendency downhill toward utilitarianism and have preferred the term *"humanism."* Among these men like F. C. S. Schiller, of Oxford, who have not held back from any speculations no matter how metaphysical, if metaphysics has promised to keep the human interests at the center. Out of such humanism has come pluralism, with its teaching that individuals are now, and always have been, existing on their own account, without much necessity of a common ground on which to meet. The only need for God would be that of a Finite bigger and greater than the other finites, those finites having as genuine a creative power as the Finite, spelled with a capital. Here the pluralists have played a curious trick on themselves, as making the same basis for absolutism as

for their own theory. They have insisted that the demands of human life are the driving forces in the search for truth, and that the satisfaction of those demands is a test of truth. Reacting against all forms of philosophic absolutism they have held fast to pluralism just because of resentment toward absolutism. Absolutism as such we are not concerned to defend, but the pluralists have failed to see that absolutism never could have attained the power to call forth such opposition if it had not in some way met a human need. That need is the craving for unity, a craving not satisfied by the current utterances of pluralism. Before the two needs of unity and diversity are met both pluralists and absolutists will have to make concession. An absolutist can conceivably be a pragmatist in that loose definition of the practical I have referred to above; for the absolutist can say that his absolutism is useful and practical to himself. All I started to say was, however, that pluralism quickly gets out into far-reaching paths.

John Dewey does not to-day make much use of the word "pragmatism." He prefers "instrumentalism." There is in Dewey's system a thorough emphasis on the higher human values, except possibly the specifically religious. For religion in any customary meaning of the term "instrumentalism" seems to have a blind spot. I

should judge that the thorough-going instrumentalist of the Dewey type would likely think of religion as an intimately personal affair of the individual life, with which the instrumentalist need not bother himself, for instrumentalism has certainly not paid any considerable attention to religion in the broader aspects. Be that as it may, there is nothing in instrumentalism fundamentally opposed to religion. The system seems to place emphasis on immediate experience to which institutions and ways of living and even forms of thought act as ministers. The importance of the human values in the system is unmistakable, of course. Moreover, the tool-aspect of the theory is so handled as to make the existence of instruments themselves point to an objective order beyond themselves. The aim of instrumentalism is not subjective. The existence of shears that can cut implies something to be cut. A tool invented for a specific, definite purpose often reveals other purposes to which it can be put. In fact the tools themselves often so carry the activities of their wielders out to unforeseen results that a tool at times seems to master its user. This natural pointing of the tool to an aim beyond itself is instrumentalism's method of holding fast to an objective world of persons and things. The logic is not always of the best, but the purpose is clear. The

instrumentalist is the last who should claim a right to protest against an outward reference of human faculties. The difficulty with the thinker of this school is that he unduly limits the number of tools in human possession. There are more tools than the instrumentalist dreams of, and they point farther outward and upward than the instrumentalist imagines.

The holders of the relativity theory to-day claim that their theory makes truth so much an affair of the individual point of view as to shatter the foundations of the old philosophical and theological beliefs in our objective order. It is one of the most curious twists in philosophy, this by which an intellectual statement has been made to mean something which it does not mean and was never intended to mean. Einstein sought for and claims to have found a formula which takes a long step toward verifying knowledge in a strictly physical realm by setting out in mathematical terms a common-to-all. According to him all our varying perceptions of a given group of phenomena can be brought into one statement which properly trained minds can grasp by a theory of tensors. The subjectivists cannot legitimately claim Einstein's support. If they are thorough-going subjectivists their system is nonsense, and if they look to objective references the references must be subjected to

scrutiny. We can hardly be satisfied with just enough belief in an objective world to provide us the means to prove that there is no such world! That is almost as reasonable as for me to ask for the existence of just one other person to whom I can prove that I alone exist.

Still another attack upon any basis for objective value in human religious ideas comes to-day from the psychologists who tell us that our conceptions of the universe are projections upon the universe of creations of our own desperately felt needs. We find ourselves in a world to which we must adjust ourselves. At some junctures we must defend ourselves against the world. At other junctures we must make use of it. Every now and again we learn that the psychologists are putting their guns into position to blow religious ideas to atoms. Such psychologists are likely to blow up their own guns, for much of the argument they threaten to use tells against all objective order. It is not much of a triumph of reasoning to get rid of a God of the universe by proving that there is no universe. Present-day psychology is in danger of sinning against all the assumptions which are necessary if we are to think at all. In addition, if we are to take the description of the subjective processes by which we arrive at truth as argument against any objective validity of truth, how is psychology to

escape the same tests? If all our conceptions of the universe are defense mechanisms, what about our psychological conceptions? The sphere of psychology seems extensive enough. It includes processes that touch all men. All the inside of life belongs to its province, according to the claim of the psychologists; and the interpretation of which I speak clamors for larger and larger recognition. What kind of projection is this interpretation itself? What in the life of this school of psychologists calls for such a scheme of adjustment to the universe, or defense against it?

The ready reply of the type of psychologist of whom I am speaking is that the only defense with which his system is concerned is defense of the truth, that his only attack is on error, that the only adjustment he seeks is to the truth. All this is said with charming simplicity, in utter forgetfulness of the assumption of a knowing agent, of a knowable world, of instruments of knowledge. When we are asked as to the validity of all these assumptions, we are favored with a picture of the psychological processes by which these factors come to be, a description in which the factors are themselves assumed at the outset. Telling how things come to be does not settle the question of their truth or falsity. Psychologically, truth and error come to be after the same steps. No matter

what the nature of the outside world, it is seized in mind by processes which do not of themselves bear witness to truth. A lie may psychologically feel like the truth, and the truth may feel like a lie. After the psychologist reports his findings the further question is before us as to their validity. If the psychologist overthrows all objectivity he is likely to overthrow objective systems of psychology along with the other objectivities.

For the past few years, there has been more or less acceptance in some philosophical quarters of what is called *fictionalism,* of which Vaihynger, of Germany, seems to be a leading exponent. Fictionalism starts from the fact that in thinking we accept assumptions which we know to be false for the sake of the good use we can make of them. The use of a fiction is different from that of an hypothesis. An hypothesis is something which may or may not be true. We try hypothesis out to see if it is, or is not, true. Fiction is fiction. We know it is not truth. Take the older idea of an atom, the idea which obtained before our present-day doctrine of electrons. An atom was an indivisible bit of matter. Now matter, if it be matter, is always divisible, hence the old-time atom was a fiction. Literally this was true, though perhaps the word "fiction" is hardly a just description of the process here. The atom was in the nature of an

arbitrary limit at which we agreed to stop the dividing process.

The practical worthfulness of this system is not to be gainsaid. It is fruitful, provided we keep our eyes open to what we are doing. The difficulty is that thinkers like Vaihynger get too many factors classified as fictions. God and the soul are, to such teachers, fictions. They are not hypotheses, which may conceivably be proved true, but fiction from the start. Here we come again upon absurdity. The fictionalist holds fast to the self long enough to prove that it does not exist. Why not treat the self just as we treat the atom? Because there is a difference in the indispensability of a real self and that of a real atom. If we could reach a doctrine of the atom consistent with itself and with the demands of a rational system, we could hold to the reality of the atom. If we hold to a real self just long enough to rule the self out we have reduced all our talk about human values, and all other values, to emptiness.

Now we come to the personalists, who take the personal as the clue to the meaning of God and the universe. Personalism in America was cogently set forth in the teachings of the late Borden Parker Bowne. Bowne showed the futility of the impersonal as the explanation of the personal. Without providing recipes for creation he established

the greater adequacy of the personal as an explanation of the impersonal, than of the impersonal as an explanation of the personal. Bowne boldly took the ground that we are to postulate an objective universe, which is the expression of the thought of a personal God, as a demand of our total human life. He differed from the pragmatists in that he insisted upon a higher order of consequence than did they, and he made place for the logical demands as they did not.

Personalism finds in the personal essentials the clew to reality. It is easy to criticize the personalists when they search for moral values in the universe, but why does not such criticism hold in the search for truth? The scientist assumes that he can find laws which hold throughout the universe, without arousing considerable hostile outcry. The poet believes in a beauty which is more than the projection of his own aesthetic impulses. As soon as we seek for moral values, however, we are told that these are projections of our own imperfect impulses. Against all this the personalist wages valiant warfare. It is not a valid objection against him to declare that human personality is marked by weakness. All he means is that self-consciousness and self-direction according to moral principles is the best key to the whole universe. It is a more legitimate objection that he does not al-

ways take due account of the non-human reference of many, many features of the world in which we live. Whatever the world in which we live, it does not have the appearance of existing for man alone, but this is no count against personalism as such. All that we need to ask of the personalist is that he conceive of the personal values as regnant in the universe, and that he make provision for the progressive advance of human personalities to likeness with the Infinite Personality.

In a word, the personalist sees in human life the highest manifestation of reality in our direct field of vision, but he does not stop there. He grasps the highest which we see as a key to what we do not see. All the systems which we have been considering agree in exalting the human values. The Christian thinker makes the most of these values. On the basis of the best we know he reaches out beyond to further interpretation in the name of that best. In doing this he is revealing himself as thoroughly human. For the human has no stopping point, at least in endeavor. Many of the humanistic systems do not allow the fullest scope to human energies. They seem to shy off from anything suggestive of metaphysics. Inasmuch as metaphysics is but self-conscious philosophy there is no reason why it should not be frankly approached. Philosophizing is as much a genu-

inely human activity as is anything else. All of us have our moments of philosophizing, and the question is as to the kind of philosophy we indulge in. Now some humanistic thinkers seem to be in agreement to make the most of their emphasis on human values, but they have a stopping-point which they reach too soon. If the human values are all-important for all of life that we see, why should we come to an abrupt and full halt in using them as we look out toward the unseen? Such halting seems to me a denial of the very best of the possibilities of humanism.

Chapter IX

THE PATH OF GREATEST RESISTANCE

We have one more factor with which we wish to deal, the attitude of what is called ordinary common sense. If we are to be entirely human in our thinking, we are often reminded, we must take the amplest possible provision for common sense. All these various theories which we have been considering seem to common sense to fly up into the air, and to part company with the real as soon as they get very far off the path of matter-of-fact daily life. It seems the essence of wisdom to some guides in human living to counsel the following of the line of least resistance. We are told that we get along quite comfortably with the forces of this world as soon as we cease to struggle against them, that they are, after all, generous conquerors when we surrender to them. As one critic put it, according to this view, it is the sum of man's duty to cultivate a wise selfishness and a thick skin.

Let me again use an illustration which I am fond of employing in discussing themes like this. Think of the attitude of a Hebrew prophet at a moment

of national crisis as he contemplated the possible defeat of the chosen people by Assyrians, or Babylonians, or other nations that knew not God. The natural conclusion of common sense in the presence of such possible defeat would be that the god of the enemy was stronger than the God of Israel, and that therefore it was best to come to terms with the stronger god. At the time of the Babylonian captivity there were hosts of Israelites who made just such an adjustment. They accepted the captivity and made the best of it. There were others, however—a blessed remnant—who never thought thus of following the line of least resistance. They drew the conclusion from Israel's defeat that God was using the alien nations as instruments for the discipline of his people. The announcement of such a doctrine to the mass of the Israelites would have been a hard saying, and to the conquerors of Israel it would have seemed a screaming absurdity. Yet the years have revealed the wisdom of the remnant in holding to an interpretation apparently in direct contradiction of common sense.

It is in one sense peculiarly human to follow an easy path, especially in thinking about the universe. There is always a clamor for an easy philosophy. In another sense it is human to take the harder path, and the great treasures for human thinking

have been won by the travelers in the hard path. Glance at our beliefs in God, in freedom, and in immortality. When these are more than lip services they are distinct achievements of the human spirit. It would not be rational to believe in God if it could be demonstrated that there is no God, but there is no possibility of any such logical contradiction of such belief, though there are many facts in life and experience which seem to contradict theism. A student of religion has recently remarked that it is not a sign of scientific integrity to hold fast to God in a universe where there is so much which seems incompatible with belief in any God whom we could call moral. It all depends on what we mean by "holding fast." Of course if we say that we have strict demonstration when we do not have it, we are not scientific, and not especially ethical. There is no lack even of scientific integrity, however, in admitting all the dark facts of the universe, and in holding fast to God in the sense of believing in spite of the appearances.

There can be no denying that faith in God is a high human achievement. I cannot think of anything more of a tribute to humanity as such than the power to believe in the God of Christianity. It is a tribute to humanity in the mass, and more especially to individuals. The way to faith in God

is open enough for all men to walk in it; or open enough, if some groups of individuals lose hold on faith, for other groups at the same time to hold fast, so that an instinctive faith lives on in sufficient power to keep the belief in God alive. If some individuals lose faith, as for example in moments of grief or affliction, there are others, not in acute distress, who can carry faith along. By the time these come to their sorrows in turn those who have previously suffered have recovered a measure of courage. All of which indicates how deeply human all this process is. Taking the ages through, the race seems made for God and finds no rest till it finds it in Him.

When we come to outstanding individuals we find faith as a more positive achievement, for while the social body keeps religion alive by the process suggested above, the individual is subject to strains on religious belief which cannot be compensated for by any increase of strength in any other phase of his activity, for he is too much of a unit to experience depression of faith in one aspect of his life and compensatory increase in another. So that it becomes a challenge to constant effort to withstand that wear and tear of life which makes for doubt, the reiterated occurrence to the experience of the individual of those terrible facts of the universe for which there is no available explanation

whatever, and the utter triviality of most events in the career of individuals and groups. We must concede that there does live more faith in some doubts than in many of the creeds. For some earnest souls prefer to believe in no God at all than to believe in a God who can do the awful things which they see done in the universe. I honor this mood profoundly, but I feel confident that the life which can hold firmly to a moral God in spite of the dark facts of the world around us, works the higher achievement. May I say that the idea of God as wrought out by generations of Christian thinkers is itself one of the noblest creations of the human mind? I know that it is the fashion to disparage theology to-day, and much theology deserves disparagement, but its central achievement, through the ages, the conception of God, deserves still to be treated as somewhat of a queen of the realms of knowledge. The emphasis on the moral qualities of God, and the adjustment of the conception of God to increasing knowledge of the universe, is indeed a triumph. If the race has merely projected its notion of God upon the universe, that projection is the best piece of good fortune that has happened to the universe. If the universe is at bottom only the outcome of physical forces, the mystery is as to how these physical forces can cast such highly spiritual projections of themselves.

The physical forces must have distorted themselves to work this miracle. In mathematics a projection is supposed to bear exact relation to that which does the projecting. In strict reason a projection can hardly be better than that which is causing the projection. As we see the lines of this so-called "God-projection" coming into finer and exacter relation to one another, we feel that there must be some marvelously keen focusing in the projecting agent. If God is just a shadow of man's own casting, the shadows are the most gracious ever cast, and the substance which casts the shadow reveals a nobility in humanity which inevitably suggests divinity.

My admiration for the idea of the Christ-like God attained by men has carried me a little to one side of my main purpose, namely, to say that their achievement has not been passive but active. Even the mystics who lay heaviest stress on making the soul sensitive to the divine presence insist most strongly upon the severe disciplines by which the sensitiveness is to be developed. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Purity is not an achievement of passivity, and vision is not passivity. It means the patient fashioning of a lens, the constant striving for exacter focus. To take a more vital, less mechanical figure of speech,

purity means soundness of health and the keenness of sight resulting therefrom.

Glance at the belief in freedom, by which we mean the free self. As I have said, reason goes to pieces without the assumption of a knowing agent free to consider and reconsider according to standards of truth. Yet the constant iteration that we are puppets jerked by seen, or unseen, economic wires, or mere stages across which march processions of ideas and feelings over which we have no control, after a long enough time is likely to prepare us for collapse of belief in our own freedom when at some crisis our powerlessness seems revealed. The same mind which recognizes the inadequacy of all psychology which deprives men of freedom may under the pressure of forces which militate against freedom cease to exert the free spirit. How terrific that pressure is! How much freedom do most of us possess in so elementary a concern as the winning of daily bread? We often object to socialism that it would interfere with our freedom by putting us in this or that place, or would order us about. How much better, however, is the actual plight in which we find ourselves? Most of us take orders from others, and those others at least profess that they are at the mercy of impersonal forces. How much does any one of us influence the political events of his time? Under

all this is our subjection to the physical organism. We exist with a bodily temperature which does not have a range of more than ten degrees Fahrenheit. The totality of limitations upon freedom is incalculable. What little freedom we have has to be won, and it is no sooner won than the battle to keep it must be fought all over again. The line of least resistance is to adjust ourselves to as much comfort as we can attain, and to dismiss all else with a despairing: "What's the use?"

Little as our freedom is, nevertheless it is most precious. It can be kept only by heroic assertion. By assertion I mean not blatant defiance but control in the direction of the lordliest ideals. Here too is an immense victory of the human spirit; this deliberate choice of the path of greatest resistance.

A word about immortality. How hard it is today to hold to such a faith! There is no direct proof of immortality in any scientific terms. Some of our difficulty is no doubt that there is so little upon which imagination can lay hold. If we are to picture another stage of personal existence beyond this life we can use only materials drawn from existence here, and our inability to make large beneficial changes in the present order hints at inability to create even in imagination a new heaven and a new earth outright. No concrete picturings of heaven have thus far been worth

listening to. There are, however, some considerations which the believer in immortality is willing to follow along a hard path, even when the path toward a comfortable adjustment to the goods of this life is most appealing, thinking of the earthly goods now not as at all unworthy. One consideration is that the obvious inequalities and injustices of this present world cry to heaven for compensation, some of them so glaring that it would take far into eternity to set them right. One human demand for immortality comes out of the poverty of human experience. What has life meant for the majority of men who have thus far lived and died on earth? At the other extreme we feel that where life proves itself at all rich it is little short of sacrilege to have it cease. So then we crave immortality when life means little, and we crave it more when it means much. This craving is called egotism by some and selfish by others,—but without point or pertinence if life is conceived of in noble terms. If the pursuit of the best is worthy, it is not just to call those selfish who crave such pursuit forever. There is, moreover, a human pressure for immortality against which the above objections could not possibly hold. There are increasing numbers of thinkers who may not be especially concerned as to what becomes of themselves in a universe without immortality, but they are deeply concerned

with what becomes of God in such a universe. I cannot see how we can preach a moral God and avow no faith in eternal life for men. To hold to such faith to-day is not by any means easy. I do not believe that any dogmatic pronouncements as to immortality will be of the least avail, and formal arguments are not much better. Nevertheless the assertion of faith in immortality by living "under the form of the eternal" is of mighty consequence.

I dislike the use of sporting terms in discussion of religious themes. It offends me to hear men speak of the venture of faith as a bet that there is a God. Still it is worth while to remember that the great prophets and seers in religion have been those who have staked all on their belief in the existence of God. There was a sure religious instinct in the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews which prompted him to catalogue as heroes those who died in the faith *not* having received the promises. It would be easy to believe in God if we always saw promises redeemed according to our expectations. The hero is he who holds on in spite of the contradictions of appearances. I am not sure that we should to-day be better off if we had material manifestations of God, or urgent proofs of the existence of God. That such evidences will one day come we may well believe, but when they do come we shall likely be beyond all need of them.

It is men who attain certainty of conviction by moral venture who are the genuine spiritual discoverers, which is another way of saying, genuine human beings.

There is to me a wonderful suggestiveness in the Gospel stories of the Risen Christ, those appearances which made possible the Christian Church. There is no record of any appearance except to prepared souls. It is altogether a marvel that the Church was founded on revelations made to a mere handful of believers. The revelations were to those who had followed Christ at cost to themselves, crowning insights following months of devotion. As it was then so is it to-day, the vision of a Living Christ comes out of walking in the Way, trusting to Truth, yielding to the magnetism of Life.

All these ventures of faith are normal to human life at its highest and best. The more a human being seeks to live on the safe side, to travel a charted course, to confine himself to routine regularities, the more he falls away from humanity toward thinghood. The more he ventures toward the unseen the larger his humanity that can be seen. There are few ventures however that do not sooner or later involve traveling toward the Cross; and while there are only a scant number who fail to see the glories of the Cross in retrospect, the number is scantier still who see the glories of the Cross actually at hand.

239 S
M 136

McConnell, F.J.

Humanism and

Christianity

13 MAY 1928
24 MAY 1929
Nov. 14.

239 S
M136